

Interview with William Haven North

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WILLIAM HAVEN NORTH

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Q: Today is February 18, 1993. This is an interview on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training with William Haven North and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Haven, could you give me a bit about your background to begin with. When you were born, where and a little about your education and maybe family and growing up.

Family background and education

NORTH: I was born on August 17, 1926 in Summit, New Jersey where my parents had lived for some time. I came from a generation of Methodist ministers on both sides of the family. My father, Eric M. North, was a Methodist minister who was General Secretary of the American Bible Society (ABS) in New York City for about 40 years. He was responsible, primarily, for the Society's international programs. In this work he traveled extensively in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. His letters and reports on his trips and the visits to our house by his colleagues from various countries provided my sisters and me with a stimulating world perspective. (One of his hobbies that I shared with him was stamp collecting. He would bring home from the office boxes of canceled stamps from letters to the office; we would sort them by country and catalogue them. A great way

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to learn about unusual parts of the world and national histories.) Both of my parents had traveled around the world in 1917 with their parents before they were married. When I was fourteen the family toured-about 11,000 miles by car-throughout the United States and Mexico.

My grandfathers on both sides were Methodists ministers. One (William Ingraham Haven) preceded my father as General Secretary of the American Bible Society (also concerned with international programs). The other (Frank Mason North) was a leader in the Methodist Church and a founder of the Federal Council of Churches which was the predecessor to the National Council of Churches. He also had been for a number of years the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Church and a leader for social reform in New York City.

One generation further back, just to complete the picture on possible influences affecting my interest in development and Africa, was my great grandfather on my mother's side, Bishop Gilbert Haven. He was a bishop in the Methodist Church and vigorous abolitionist. At one point in his service as bishop, he was appointed to the Liberia Conference as the Methodist Church's first bishop to Liberia. He went out to Liberia by ship in 1876 to attend the Methodist's first Liberian Mission Conference in Africa. It took him something like 45 days to make the trip out; he traveled over much of Liberia. Interestingly, one his ideas for African development was the construction of a railroad from Liberia to Cairo! He was quite a traveler in his day in Europe, the United States, and Mexico and wrote prolifically about his travels. His life, views and experiences have always been of special interest to me.

This brief sketch gives you a flavor of my family background and the likely origins of my interest in international affairs, particularly Africa and international development. The direct causal factors may be more a matter of happenstance and the opportunities of the moment. However, these influences did affect the decisions I made on what I turned down or did not pursue as well as what I found acceptable.

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Q: Often I have people who live out in Kansas or some place without any international dimension in their background. Where did you go to school?

NORTH: I went to public schools in Summit, New Jersey, which had a good school system. From there I went on to Wesleyan University, Connecticut in the summer of 1944. While in college, I was drafted and served two years in the Army, the infantry, in Europe and then returned to college and graduated in 1949.

Q: Where did you serve in Europe?

NORTH: Mostly in Germany (1945-1946). It was just at the end of the war. Roosevelt died in April, 1945 while I was on board a troop ship crossing the Atlantic. My group spent most of its time in Europe in training preparatory to the expected invasion of Japan. I have recently been reading a biography of Truman by David McCullough. The period, described in the book, about the dropping of the atomic bomb and the consequent shortening of the war with Japan was more relevant to me than I knew at the time. I hadn't connected that tragic event with my situation but it meant that our infantry battalion was not sent to participate in the invasion and that service tours were shortened.

For the last year in Germany, I served with the 60th Army Ground Forces Band and lived in Heidelberg. (I had played the trombone in my high school band.) We played for 7th Army events and parades. We played at General Patton's funeral. We would get up and greet the troops at 6:00 in the morning with the Missouri Waltz-reportedly, one of Truman's favorite pieces of music. I also had the opportunity to study German and take a course in harmony with a German composer, Wolfgang Fortner. It was a rather uneventful but interesting time.

Q: What were you majoring in?

NORTH: I majored in history and economics, but mostly European history. I went to a summer program at Columbia University so that I could finish college more or less on

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schedule and graduated in 1949. Then I went straight on to Columbia University for a masters in European history. During that time I became interested in African history and the development of poor countries (also encouraged by my history professor at Wesleyan). While at graduate school I lived at International House and again was exposed to people from many countries in an exceptionally stimulating setting of social and intellectual activity. I met my wife (Jeanne Foote) there; we were married in 1950. It was a transition period for me as I was trying to sort out my future, as it became clear that I was not cut out to be an historian. It was at that time that I heard about the Point Four Program.

First assignment with the Technical Cooperation Administration (Point 4)-1952

In January 1949 Truman made his inaugural address in which the fourth point was about technical assistance to developing countries which appealed to me-a "bold new program" it was called. I felt it was something that I would like to work with but I didn't know how to get started. I had written to various people with little response. Then, I took the U.S. Government's junior management intern examination, which was a government-wide examination for new entrants into government service. I was accepted as a candidate and was given the option of becoming a civilian in the Navy and one or two other departments in government. The Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) for the Point Four program was just being formed and a helpful personnel officer expressed an interest in my coming to work for TCA. At that time, the position that was being offered was as an intern in a civil service position. However, just about the time I was to come to work and move to Washington with my wife and year old daughter, I was told that Congress and the Executive branch had put a freeze on all positions; there were no vacancies. Therefore, the job I was supposed to get was not available. However, I was told that if I would agree to going overseas in six months, I could be employed in TCA's foreign service. Without thinking too long about it and in the need of a job, and, most important, interested in the Point Four program, my wife and I agreed that I would take that position and make that

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commitment. We moved to Washington in August 1952. I was assigned to the Ethiopian Desk right off to write Congressional Presentations.

Q: As it applied to Ethiopia, what were these presentations?

NORTH: These were TCA's budget requests to Congress. We had to justify the projects, the reasons why we had the program in the country and provide details on the budget for the coming fiscal year. Basically the same thing USAID desk officers are doing today with varying degrees of elaboration and detail. I had to learn fast. There was no training program. No orientation. I was just assigned to the Ethiopian desk to fill in for one of the staff who was going abroad. So for the next six months I worked on the desk. I happened to have a very good Desk Officer, Adele Boke, as my supervisor. She was very helpful in teaching me about the tasks at hand. So in the process of doing the work, I learned quickly about TCA and programming responsibilities. I found myself writing justifications for education programs in Ethiopia before I barely knew where Ethiopia was and much about education projects. It was an interesting experience.

The Technical Cooperation Administration was my first experience with reorganization processes and personnel shifts. I recall that my impression of reorganization processes at the time was like squeezing a balloon: a squeeze in one place results in a bulging in another. Also I was struck by how the bureau manager, who was responsible for the staffing changes and related anxieties, left on a trip just before the changes were announced. This seemed somewhat cowardly. At that time there were only two countries in Africa receiving assistance-Ethiopia and Liberia and no separate bureau for Africa. The country desks for these two countries were included in the Bureau for the Near East and South Asia.

Q: Where did this fit in at that time, the Technical Cooperation Administration?

NORTH: The Technical Cooperation Administration was set up to implement the fourth point of President Truman's inaugural address-"Point Four" became the popularized

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nickname for TCA. It was associated with the Mutual Security Administration (MSA) which was responsible for economic and military assistance. This was just after the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) had been terminated. MSA and TCA were coordinated by a foreign assistance coordinator in the State Department. Douglas Dillon was the first person to fill this position. The Point Four program was the first initiative of global scale for assistance to developing countries, although quite modestly funded. It was based on the philosophy that if the developing countries had the benefits of Western technology, their development would accelerate and economic growth would "take off." It was a valid concept and still is, but it was too simplistic in its understanding of the political, economic, and cultural forces in the developing countries that influenced their development. It was perhaps a little too naive about what western technology could accomplish in cultures and societies that are very different from the west. And as is so often the case, time frames for what could be accomplished were much too optimistic. Some people have been very critical, in their hindsight, of what we tried to do in the Point Four program. My view is that a great deal was accomplished that laid the foundations for future development activity, but that comes later.

After the six months at TCA in Washington, I had to make up my mind where I wanted to go overseas. There happened to be a position...actually it wasn't much of a position.. in the Ethiopia Point Four Mission The Mission had been started in Ethiopia in 1951 and was looking for staff. Word came that the Mission would like to have some junior officers. So I agreed to go. The Mission didn't have a formally established position, so it was said that I was going out to run the motor pool and the filing system, which was a gimmick to get me on the books. But when I arrived my position was classified as a research assistant in the Program Office.

Assignment to Ethiopia-1953

The Ethiopia tour was a fascinating and highly instructive experience for Jeanne and I. We stayed there just short of five years, leaving at the very end of 1957.

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Q: What was the situation, as you saw it, from 1952-57 in Ethiopia?

NORTH: Ethiopia was an intriguing country at that time and extremely poor, although I didn't know very much about it before I went there. (Barbara Ward's-the noted writer and advocate of the development of poor countries-comment about Ethiopia is indicative of its stage of development. "When asked which country the Lord preferred some time after the creation, the response was Ethiopia because it is the closest to how I created it.") This was the time when Haile Selassie, as Emperor, was working to modernize the country; he placed a high priority on education. At that time, there were very few institutions of most any kind concerned with the country's development. There were very few Ethiopians with advanced training in the numerous areas of development activity. The Emperor relied heavily on teachers and technicians from the U.S., Canada, and Europe; some were associated with missionary programs to begin the formation of basic development institutions, particularly schools and hospitals. A number of teachers from the United States, Canada, and the U.K. were recruited to staff the secondary schools-an early precursor to the Peace Corp. (We have a number of friends from that time and recently celebrated a fiftieth reunion with some of them.) The Jesuits staffed the University College; the Jesuits also had a mission school in Harar (eastern Ethiopia) where Haile Selassie had studied and learned French when a boy. The Seventh Day Adventists, other mission groups, and the Russian Red Cross had hospital programs dating back to the 1930s. The Swedes were the first mission group in Ethiopia beginning in the 1860s. During the period 1920-1935, when the Ras Tafari became first regent (1916) and then Emperor in 1930 , Haile Selassie, (The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the First Elect of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia), the first rudiments of modernization and development were appearing. But most of these early developments took place in the years after the Italian occupation ended in the 1940s.

However, there were no agricultural schools at the secondary or university levels. There were no teacher training colleges, no vocational schools, no public health training

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programs and only the beginnings of an educational system. Much of the educational system of a few elementary and secondary schools, which had been started by the Emperor before the Italian occupation, had been eliminated by the Italians during the occupation. Except for those who had escaped to Europe for schooling, few of the educated Ethiopians survived the massacres by the Italians. The small corp of educated leadership that had been developed before the occupation had been largely eliminated. As a consequence, there were almost no Ethiopians trained in the fields essential for the country's development. Beginning in 1943, the Government had to renew its efforts to build its educational system. It was in this setting that the Point Four Program was initiated in 1951 with a primary focus on building educational institutions of all kinds in the principal areas of development, but mainly in agriculture.

While the Point 4 program in Ethiopia reflected the President Truman's desire to share U.S. technology with the poorer countries in the world, the reasons for US assistance to Ethiopia were also motivated by the US interest in maintaining a communications base in Eritrea. The Kagnaw Communications Base-before the age of satellites-provided an important link in US military global communications that was free of the periodic distortions that characterized the communications facilities closer to the polar regions. While US military assistance to Ethiopia played a more dominant role as a quid pro quo for this purpose, the Point Four program certainly served this purpose as well. This was more evident at the time of the Richards Mission (April 1957) to the Middle East including Ethiopia to promote the Eisenhower doctrine to combat the spread of communist influence. (Ambassador Richards was a former Congressman appointed to represent the President on this mission to contain communism.) In return for certain assurances, a special grant of \$5.0 million of economic assistance was provided along with some military items such as helicopters and radio facilities.

This mission and its fall out provided me with my first experience with the tensions between US political/security and development interests. In anticipation of Washington's approval of the \$5.0 million grant (a substantial sum at the time) the Point Four Mission

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staff had worked around the clock to determine how the funds could be used to support the technical cooperation program, particularly for buildings and equipment for the agricultural college. We had presented our suggestions to the Coordinator for Technical Assistance in the Government and to Washington in a very detailed budget document.

About the same time, a message was sent from the State Department to the Ambassador instructing him to tell the Government about the approval of the grant. When we at the Point Four Mission heard that the cable had come in, we raced across town to the Embassy to catch the Ambassador before he spoke to the Emperor. We wanted to have him outline the plans we were discussing with the Ethiopian Technical Assistance Coordinator. But we just missed him. He presented the grant to the Emperor without any explanation about its uses. Meanwhile we had received a sharp criticism from Washington that our proposed uses of the grant should be limited to a few large activities and not allocated in smaller sums to support existing programs. When we subsequently met with the Ethiopian Technical Assistance Coordinator, we were told that our proposals were completely unacceptable. The grant had been given to the Government to use as it wished. As a consequence, the major portion of the grant went for radio and security equipment, the costs of transferring President Truman's old four engine Constellation for use by the Emperor and the Ethiopian Airlines (later crashed in the Sudan with commercial passengers-all survived), and other similar items. However, we were able to preserve a substantial portion of the funds for the Agricultural College facilities and other activities. This was the first of many experiences with balancing development objectives with US political/security interests. Did the grant make any difference in containing the spread of communism, at that time? I doubt it; there were other political and diplomatic concerns in U.S.-Ethiopia's relations of greater importance. But the Point Four program did get some additional funding.

Q: It is incredible that one country, i.e. the United States government, has a program in place and then comes out with just money to give out.

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NORTH: Well, this was a truly political/security interest, with the specific objective of persuading the Emperor and the Government to prevent the encroachment of communism, to strengthen the Government's resolve. (This was just one of several countries that was involved in this initiative.) It is an example of a classic problem for people working in the development business when efforts to influence the uses of assistance runs counter to or complicates State Department efforts aimed at achieving political/security objectives. That was my first experience of this kind, of which I have had many since.

Q: What were the connections in America? Was it Oklahoma?

NORTH: The centerpiece of the Point Four program was the Emperor's desire for an agricultural college and research facility. This was at the time when Dr. Henry Bennett, former President of Oklahoma State University (OSU), became the first Administrator of the Technical Cooperation Administration. Because of his university experience, he was a dedicated advocate of the agricultural land grant university system that had developed in the U.S. He believed that this approach to agricultural education, research and extension services should be central in carrying out the Point Four technical assistance philosophy. The linking of land grant universities in the U.S. with counterpart institutions in developing countries was the key, in his view, to modernizing agricultural practices. The Agricultural College project in Ethiopia carried out by Oklahoma State University was the first of its kind in overseas development. It was a landmark at the beginning of the U.S. overseas land grant university program that continued for nearly three decades. Over time the program spread to 20 or 30 countries around the world with American land grant universities and colleges helping to create or strengthen counterpart agricultural college and universities in developing countries.

The first OSU mission to Ethiopia was around 1950, the project agreement was signed in 1951, and the first people began to arrive in 1952. (I arrived in March 1953.) The purpose was to establish an agricultural college and research center and extension services.

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When the OSU people got there they found there were no students who were qualified to enter a college program. So they started a technical school called the Jimma Agricultural Technical School. The first group of the OSU contract staff went to Jimma, which is in the southwest, some distance from Addis Ababa. They started the school from scratch. Over the years since then, the school has trained hundreds of Ethiopian agricultural experts and carried out research, continuing as a secondary level vocational agriculture program. In due course there were enough graduates to move on into a university program.

At the same time, the OSU staff and government were planning an agricultural college which was eventually located in Alamaya, near Harar. The Oklahoma State people and the Point Four administration wanted very much to have the university near Addis Ababa because that was the seat of government, that was where the Ministry of Agriculture was located, but the Emperor said no. He wanted it near Harar in the eastern part of the country where he came from but also to spread the benefits of development activity throughout the country.

TCA provided all of the facilities for the agricultural college from the ground up and initial teaching and research staff. OSU brought in the students from the Jimma school and started research and extension programs in the local areas. After 15 years, when OSU's work was formally terminated, Ethiopia had a flourishing agricultural college, staffed by Ethiopian agriculturists. So over a period of 20 years and starting from almost zero in terms of available institutions and trained Ethiopians, the Point Four program built up the core of the country's agricultural development program. Some of the graduates went abroad for further training in agriculture, came back with advanced degrees and became the faculty. A number of the graduates of the university are now active in international development work. I hear about them or see them once in a while carrying out technical assistance programs. One of my Ethiopian friends works with the World Bank; others for Michigan State University, and similar institutions. Here is an example of an evolution from a period when there was almost nothing on the ground to the creation of a competent national institution and professional expertise. But it took almost 20 years to bring this

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about. The Ethiopian ties with OSU are still strong to this day. I was not aware of it at the time but the Point 4 agricultural college project in Ethiopia was a decade or so ahead of comparable institutional development in agriculture in other African countries and preceded those established in other parts of the world such as India.

In addition to the agricultural college project, we used the contract with OSU as sort of a body shop. Rather than have separate contracts for each project activity, we asked OSU to hire project staff, not necessarily from Oklahoma. I think this probably was a mistake-the OSU contract staff was larger than the Mission-but it was convenient; I learned from that experience not to put all of ones eggs in the same basket.

Q: Also, you had a ruler, who probably more than anybody else in Africa, felt that education was the key, didn't he?

NORTH: He put a high priority on education, for example, he retained the position of Minister of Education for himself leaving the day-to-day operations to a Vice-Minister. While there is much about his venality and autocratic leadership that one finds troubling, one of the monuments of his time will be his determination to introduce modern education to the country. (A priority that experienced severe set backs during the Italian occupation and subsequently during the period of brutal leadership following the coup in 1974.)

Q: What were you mainly doing?

NORTH: My position was (I was a relatively junior person at that time) in the Program Office helping to design the program and projects, prepare the budget justifications, and negotiate project agreements. But I also had an interesting sideline because the Point Four official, Dr. William Wrinkle, who was heading the education program, asked me to work with him as a research assistant. So I spent a good deal of time working with the Ministry of Education on various projects related to improvements in Ethiopian education.

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One of my assignments was helping the Ethiopian personnel officer in the Ethiopian Ministry of Education develop a salary schedule for the teachers throughout the country. There was no structured salary system; teachers were not getting paid or paid on time; and they were leaving teaching faster than new teachers could be trained. So I was helping to introduce some of the concepts of modern, at that time, salary structures and patterns and help the Ministry reform its educational system. I did one study for the Ministry on why there was such a high turnover in Ethiopian teachers trying to understand some of the issues affecting educational development. I helped develop the schedule which was subsequently adopted by the Ministry for Addis Ababa but not without considerable difficulty. As a result, I had a good exposure to the Ministry of Education, to the Ethiopians working in the Ministry and our own experts in education, and to the challenge of moving a reform from policy to practice.

We had quite a large staff working in educational development. In those days we had a concept which was particularly important in the education program- probably borrowed from Latin American servicio programs-called a Joint Fund. It was sort of a shadow government and administration that operated in parallel with the Ministry with a special office funded jointly by the U.S. and Ethiopian governments for developmental services. The office had its own facilities, budget and staffing and operated with considerable freedom from Ethiopian Government and Point Four procedures and regulations. The Point Four education program contained all kinds of projects. Curriculum development, textbook development based on Ethiopian history and culture, salary systems and tests development, teacher training school development, community education, technical education, a handicraft school to promote the use of Ethiopian designs not Persian (such as for carpets that the Emperor gave to head of states when he traveled), and large numbers of Ethiopians sent to the U.S. for training. Recently, in my work with UNDP, I met two UNDP Resident Representatives from Ethiopia who had during their college days worked with the Point Four education program writing Ethiopian stories for textbooks.

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In addition to the agriculture college and education programs, the Point Four was involved in rinderpest disease control, an extension service program with Point Four staff working on district agricultural schemes and well drilling in the more arid areas. Another major program and one of the more interesting pioneering efforts was the Gondar College of Public Health and Training Center. It was one of the first, perhaps the first, attempts in developing countries to develop paramedical personnel to work in rural community health services-teams of community health officers, public health nurses, and sanitarians. The Gondar Public Health College has since become a medical school. I am not sure what happened to the paramedical program. The people who worked on that project have been influential over the years in shaping what has now become more commonly accepted as decentralized/generalized public health services with paramedical personnel. This was one of the first. Dr. Clayton Curtis from Arkansas' tuberculosis program was the first director of the college. (See interview with Dr. J. S. Prince on the Gondar project and U.S. assistance to public health development in Africa)

Another interesting project provided technical assistance in mapping the country. At the time there were few maps that were accurate. The old Italian maps had towns and villages in wrong locations and incorrectly named, if identified at all. The mapping project-the Ethiopian Geography Institute-purchased a helicopter (possibly from the \$5.0 million mentioned above; one of the first in the country) to assist the geographers identify villages, farming areas, and roads (trails) and prepare official maps for development planning. (The Institute continues today.)

The Emperor's concern (though probably minimal) about Eritrea's acceptance of a federated relationship led to his wish to extend development projects to Eritrea. As a consequence, the Point Four program, established a branch office in Asmara with projects for technical education, public health, and economic development planning.

Other technical assistance projects were concerned with promoting private investment with assistance to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and an elaborate survey of the

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Blue Nile River basin with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. This latter project grew out a U.S. response to the Ethiopian concerns over the Egyptian's plans to build the Aswan Dam and Egypt's use of the waters of the Blue Nile. One of my interesting assignments before going to Ethiopia was to study the issue of riparian rights in international law as it applied to Ethiopia-all Ethiopian Rivers are international.

In all of these activities, my function was to assist in developing country program strategies, project designs, budget preparations, the annual presentations to Washington, monthly reports, and the preparation and negotiation of project agreements. (The latter was particularly tedious as each project agreement had to be typed (no word processors in those days) with fourteen carbons in duplicate with each page signed-one set with the United States Government named first and one set with the Imperial Ethiopian Government named first; a carry over from treaty formats, I presume.)

Q: This was a massive organization. How did you feel that the Americans and Ethiopians worked together? Were there big cultural problems?

NORTH: Yes and no; in general, I think we worked together quite well. At the time we were in Ethiopia, there were very few Ethiopians studying abroad and those who had were just beginning to return. Their lives were largely dictated by the Emperor as to what to study and what jobs they were assigned to on their return. So for anybody with advanced education and training or status, life was very much determined by the Emperor, personally. We found, in the early period, that those who had returned from overseas training were ambivalent in their feelings about the Americans resident in Ethiopia; many of them were hard to communicate with, developing friendships was difficult. Even though they had had a Western education, they were torn between their traditional culture, the Emperor's personal wishes, and the country's Byzantine political world in which they had to live and their desire to preserve their Western ties. So it took quite awhile to establish close relationships, although over time we were successful in having a number of good Ethiopian friends. Similarly, relations with senior government officials and the Emperor

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were generally very good. It is my impression that Ethiopians continue to have positive memories of the Point Four program and their relationships with Americans despite the difficult political circumstances after the military coup in 1974 and the Government's turn to the Soviets.

This illustrates what I think you will find over and over again (and in other countries with US assistance programs) that the Ethiopians, who were sent abroad during that time and the Ethiopians we worked with in the country, developed a very warm relationship with Americans. The Point Four program helped over time build up a base of positive feelings, despite all the things that have happened since the mid-seventies in change of leadership and the communist push. The basic relationship is still very strong, I believe.

This was a time when Ethiopia was relatively peaceful and one could travel widely in the country. It was rugged travel that required one to carry all of one's supplies of food, water, and gasoline and repair items; often cross-country driving in areas without roads; and mostly camping. But during these trips, we became acquainted with Ethiopian life in the rural areas and the severely impoverished living conditions of the people. Our reception by the Ethiopian people in the villages was almost uniformly friendly, hospitable, and often curious about their visitors. It is a fascinating country with beautiful scenery, although the severe environmental problems of massive erosions were evident then and are worse today. At same time, Ethiopia was a very Byzantine world full of personal intrigue; one rarely knew what was going on in the government and who was in and who was out. The Emperor was held in great awe, almost as a deity. When he took his evening ride about town, people would throw themselves in front of his car to stop him in order to deliver a petition. If we were on the road at the same time, we were obliged to stop and get out and bow! (Once we made a mistake and stopped and bowed only to discover that it was the Dutch Ambassador; he had a broad grin on his face as he passed!)

There is one interesting example where the Point Four program ran up against the local culture. At the request of the Ministry of Education, a group from the Point Four office

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went into the Danakil desert region to discuss with the local leaders the formation of local schools. The Danakils are a rather fearsome nomadic tribe. It became clear from the outset that they strongly opposed the idea of a local school program even if it was mobile and traveled with them. They saw it as a threat by the Government to make them settle down; they would have nothing to do with it and made it clear that the visiting Point Four staff should leave immediately or else. The Point Four public health staff had a similar experience. I came to appreciate their view when I drove a truck from Djibouti across the Danakil desert to Addis Ababa; there was no road from Djibouti to the Assab highway; we just followed the compass northward. During this trip we met some Danakils wearing their large curved knives; and saw their small clusters of skin and branch houses.

Q: In the Mission you were obviously the junior officer, pretty far down the line, but did you get any feeling about relations between the Embassy and the Mission?

NORTH: Over the five years in Ethiopia I moved up the ladder and became the Program Officer and probably the person with, at that time, the longest memory of what went on in the Point Four program and our work with the Ethiopians. That sometimes was an asset and sometimes not. Over the five years I became more and more involved with greater responsibilities. We had directors and deputy directors that changed, but my role, because of the continuity of experience and my advancement to be the Program Officer, gave me a lot of involvement across the board.

Relations with the Embassy from my perspective were generally satisfactory. We had, of course, a sequence of ambassadors, some professional and some not so. One ambassador who stood out in my mind was Dr. Simonson, who was a Republican from Minnesota and had been a chaplain in the State legislature. He was an interesting personality, very different from the traditional career diplomat. He frequently repeated that his interests were in preaching, politics, and poultry—he had some chickens near the residence to the delight of our 4-year-old daughter. He was very congenial, kindly to Jeanne and I and well-intentioned but not very competent in Embassy work.

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During this time, Vice President and Pat Nixon visited Ethiopia. We were told that all Americans should be at the airport to greet him- a large crowd with American flags. We also met them at a reception-a somewhat stiff affair. Subsequently, Nixon reportedly exclaimed that there were too many Americans overseas and as President he later moved to reduce the number of official Americans abroad. Also during this visit the Ambassador was severely criticized by Nixon and the Ethiopian officialdom for the seating arrangements at the formal dinner for Nixon-a failure in protocol that upset the ranking Ethiopian ministers.

However, Jeanne and I, as the youngest members of the official community, had a special opportunity to associate with the Embassy personnel as we lived, for a while, on the Embassy compound. Point Four had constructed a duplex house in preparation for an expanded Point Four Mission but few Point Four staff wished to live on the Embassy compound. The chancery and the Ambassador's residence and many of the houses of the principal officers were on the compound so it was a pretty close situation. Being junior and nearby, we were invited from time to time at the last minute to formal dinner parties when an invited guest failed to show up-not an usual situation in Ethiopia. As a consequence, we had the opportunity to meet Ethiopia's ministers and high level visitors.

Q: You left Ethiopia with a very positive feeling towards the work of Point Four. Did you decide to continue in it?

NORTH: Well, I probably stayed there too long. Five years in such a remote place left me isolated from the main stream of assistance activity. I had a very limited understanding of the overall US assistance program worldwide, although I did have two interesting trips during that period-one to Beirut on international training, and the other to Thailand and India to learn about community development. This was the time when "community development" as a new approach to poverty alleviation was the rising priority in development philosophies. By visiting community development projects in Thailand and India, where the program was most advanced, I developed a first hand understanding of

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the problems and prospects for this approach to development. The approach has been too easily discredited by hind sight commentators on development and many of the concepts such as participation are returning as essential in development processes.

Return to Washington: remnants of the ECA program and the new programs for Africa-1958

After we left Ethiopia, I was assigned to the European Bureau; up to this time, Africa had been one desk in the European Bureau which managed the residual activities of the ECA program. At that time, of course, the Point Four and TCA had changed to the International Cooperation Administration. The U.S. assistance program changed its names several times before 1961. In 1953, it became the Foreign Operations Administration, then in 1955 the International Cooperation Administration. So there were quite a few major reorganizations during the 1950s. Largely they were a matter of integrating different aid components. TCA was purely technical assistance. With the reorganizations, it was, first, integrated with economic aid and, later, capital assistance (the Development Loan Fund) to become the Agency for International Development in 1961. So over the years, until the formation of USAID, there was a period of considerable organizational turmoil and some severe and badly handled personnel adjustments such as the "Stassenation." (Harold Stassen, head of FOA, personally determined who was to remain and who was to be terminated using a mix of test results, personnel files and political whim. The uproar over this procedure brought it to an end before affecting those overseas.)

My work in the European Bureau gave me the opportunity to be involved in a number of projects in Europe, primarily related to the use of the large residual balances of counterpart funds from the Marshall Plan. One project I was involved in was the building of a hotel in Berlin. It was Eleanor Dulles'...she was the Berlin desk officer...pet project.

Q: Eleanor Jones who was known as Madame Berlin at that time. She was the sister of John Foster Dulles.

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NORTH: She was obsessed with building this hotel as a sign of continuing interest in the city's welfare. Other programs involved, for example, technical assistance to Yugoslavia and a children's hospital in Poland. My work largely related to helping with the planning, budgeting, and authorizations for these activities. Generally, it was a time when I had the opportunity to learn about the wider dimensions and procedures of U.S. assistance and Congressional relations.

Q: You were working on Berlin and other things, but did you have an African cast?

NORTH: In time, most of the work was on Africa. It was an interesting period to be there- a time of change when the Bureau for Europe and Africa became the Bureau for Africa and Europe as the European activities phased down and the African program grew. This was the time of the wave of African independence movements, i.e. late 1950s and early 1960s.

Q: You were in Washington from 1958-61; this was when Ghana and other African countries became independent; it was a very exciting time.

NORTH: It was a very exciting time. Suddenly the U.S. began to discover Africa and the need to show its support for independence movements. The U.S. had had a few programs in some African countries. If you dig back into the development archeology of the time, you would find some remnants of U.S. assistance channeled through the European metropolises such as a road built in Eastern Nigeria during World War II to get coal for the war effort. There was the construction of Roberts Field in Liberia and Burma Camp in Ghana- military establishments for U.S. air transshipment flights to North Africa. (One side result of the venture in Ghana was the introduction of the potato-not the yam. The base wanted to have potatoes and introduced potato cultivation in the hills near Accra, which is continuing to this day, I believe.)

It was interesting being in ICA at that time assisting in the responses to the independence movements. One of the typical State Department requirements was to provide

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independence gifts every time a country became independent. For example, there were mobile health vans and a gift to Nigeria of \$100,000 for a library for its Institute of International Affairs. They were quick but rarely lasting responses that sometimes turned sour. However, the major effort that I was engaged in was the planning of long term assistance programs for the newly independent African countries.

ICA made an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to undertake a study of Sub saharan Africa...what were the development needs, what were the requirements for U.S. assistance? Dr. Harar, who was I think the head of the Rockefeller Foundation, was asked to organize a team and visit east and west African countries. The Harar report became the base for planning and designing future assistance to Africa. Again the main emphasis was on agriculture, education, and health, much like the Ethiopian program. Out of that grew the Special Program for Tropical Africa (SPTA), which my colleagues and I in the Program Office of the Bureau put together. We had much grander plans but they were scaled back to a modest amount of money-about \$20 million. But it was an important initiative at that time; I doubt that anyone remembers the initiative as it is never referred to.

The SPTA was the core of the first U.S. effort to respond to African development interests; this was just before Kennedy became President and USAID was founded. This program was essentially a start up fund for teacher training colleges, secondary schools, vocational schools, agricultural schools and research activities; mostly for educational institutions. Projects were developed for Uganda, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, etc. None of the program was in the Francophone area-the French were not very interested in having the U.S. active in the Francophone west African countries at that time, particularly in education, although subsequently some agricultural programs were undertaken.

The SPTA provided the base for a very significant and long term relationship of American institutions in Africa. After identifying educational projects in various countries, one of the tasks was to find U.S. institutions that would implement them. I recall that there was a team of four of us who traveled throughout the United States interviewing colleges

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and universities. I remember my assignment was to travel the West coast and visit San Francisco State College, University of Oregon, Portland State College, etc. I interviewed the staffs somewhat the way you interview someone for a job. The presidents of the schools and others would introduce me to their staffs and describe why they were interested in working in Africa. I had to size up their commitment and capabilities. (I returned from this trip on President Kennedy's inauguration day in the midst of a major snowstorm.) By this process, with my three other colleagues who visited colleges in other parts of the States, we linked various American institutions to programs in Africa countries. From this beginning there developed a long period of productive relationships-some fared better than others; I am sure that some of the American and African institutions and their staffs are still associated informally.

Q: What was the motivation behind American universities wanting to get involved in Africa? How did they approach it?

NORTH: You have to put it in the context of the time when there was a great flurry of interest in Africa and working in developing countries. Africa was a new continent for Americans; there was a keen interest in becoming involved. It had a certain romantic appeal, I suppose, but there was also an element of idealism that developed before and during the Kennedy presidency. There was the sense of adventure, the thought of a Peace Corps-type of experience, getting out to help people in poor communities. There was also, for the American land grant colleges and universities-certainly going way back to the program in Ethiopia- a strong interest in having an international dimension to their university programs. Some of the leadership of the universities were sufficiently farsighted to see that the future of the U.S. was very much tied to what goes on in the world and the importance of linking our experience, our knowledge, and our technology with developments in other countries. Of course, it was a period when the U.S. was the dominant power and becoming increasingly occupied with the containment of the Soviet Union. The U.S. was providing most of the foreign assistance; we were the leader in international affairs and development and therefore, as a superpower, there was a great

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drive to be involved in all of the newly independent countries, which spilled over into the response to the African situation. However, not everybody was enthusiastic. I recall that when we sent a memorandum to USAID Administrator Hamilton about starting a program in Mali, there was a note written on the margin: "Where in hell is Mali?"

It was, thus, an interesting time to be putting together new programs and expanding assistance to Africa substantially. And as more countries became independent we responded to them. There were the special events such as the Congo (Zaire) crisis in the early 1960s. Thinking about the Somali situation today, many people don't seem to remember the time in Zaire when the U.S. funded the UN to run the Zaire government because there were essentially no Zairians who had advanced education or training at that time. The country had been dominated by the Belgians who had given very little attention to the education of the Africans beyond the elementary grades. So there was a tremendous gap in governmental capacity when the Belgians withdrew.

Perhaps one of the most important initiatives at that time was the beginning of the African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU). I was involved in the preparations for this program within ICA. This program grew out of a concern of leading American universities that Africans had a very negative view of American education. This view was reinforced by both the early experiences of some Africans with segregation in the U.S. and their attendance at some of the poorer U.S. colleges. Also the Europeans-British and French-working in Africa promoted the view that American education was inferior. To counter these negative biases and, most important, to assist in African development, Dean Henry at Harvard and others organized the ASPAU. Under this program, the leading universities provided tuition free education for Africans, and ICA paid for the per diem and travel costs; the African governments were also supposed to share in the costs. The students were carefully screened. Over the years hundreds of talented Africans had the opportunity for quality undergraduate education in the U.S. As African universities grew, the undergraduate program was phased out and replaced with a graduate level program

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(AFGRAD). The impact of these programs is hard to judge but they certainly were key in developing African leadership in many areas of Africa's development.

Q: You then went out to Nigeria?

Assignment to USAID in Nigeria: a major new development program-1961

NORTH: Yes. I was in Washington for only three years. I was asked by the director of the Mission in Nigeria, Joel Bernstein, to come to Nigeria and be the Assistant Director for Program. Nigeria was one of the African countries of major interest to the U.S. at that time. It was the most populous country in Africa and portrayed to visitors a dynamic development situation. It fit into the Kennedy Administration's idea of a positive development situation deserving major support. It was at the time when USAID was being formed to respond to the developing world. He began the Peace Corps at the same time. I arrived in Nigeria in the summer of 1961 (about 9 months after Nigerian independence) and never worked so hard in all my life. We built up a large program very rapidly. I am not sure of this, but my sense is that before Vietnam, it was the largest U.S. program for technical assistance anywhere in the world. Nigerian, Brazil, and Tunisia had been selected by the Kennedy Administration as the major recipients of U.S. assistance.

One of the key features of the new USAID approach was the adoption of Long Range Assistance Strategies for selected developing countries that had democratic governments, national development plans, and were politically important to the United States. For these countries, USAID was prepared to make long term multi-year commitments of assistance-an unusual break from the pattern of year-by-year commitments. In early 1961, the U.S. agreed to provide a multi year grant of \$225 million for development activities in support of the Nigerian Government's newly adopted national development plan. (See Wolfgang Stöpler's book *Planning Without Facts* about his work as advisor to the Nigerian Government on development planning.) This Long Term Assistance grant was a mixed blessing from my experience working with the Government on determining the uses of

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the funds. We still had to make annual budget submissions as part of the process of obtaining Congressional appropriations. While the grant provided a useful framework for planning our development assistance program, it was a constant bone of contention with the Nigerian officials over what assistance activities should and should not be attributed to the grant-particularly when we put forward ideas for projects they had not envisioned. Generally, we sought to downplay the fact of the long term grant once the initial political impact had been achieved and focus on the projects. It took several years for the full amount to be drawn down and I don't believe anyone ever made a final accounting.

My role as Assistant Director for Program was, under the direction of the Mission Director and in close collaboration with heads of the Mission's technical divisions, to lead the program office staff in the preparation of elaborate program strategies linking development goals, program objectives, and project targets in a hierarchical presentation and taking into account the activities of the Government and other donors. I recall one massive submission of some 500 pages of analysis and project detail (in those days project justifications-project papers today though much simpler) were included in the annual budget submission, known as E-1 sheets). I'm not sure anyone in Washington ever read it .

At that time there were only four states (called regions) and the Federal Government-now there are 23 states, I believe. These states were relatively independent in their development activities. As a consequence, the USAID program evolved into, in effect, five separate programs each about the size of a country program in other parts of Africa. This situation caused enormous complications in working out project plans and agreements in those instances where we sought to maintain a national perspective and strengthen national cohesion-one of the program's policy objectives. Each project agreement required, for example, the signatures of the technical and planning ministries in each region and the Federal Government with all the negotiation complexities and obligation deadlines that go with such agreements. Over time as the program evolved we observed the various regional programs and staffs taking on the coloration-becoming

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local advocates-of their region and the weakening of the national perspective. I recall in 1965 an extended and tension filled debate among the regional program directors, the heads of the technical divisions and myself with the Mission Director-Bill Lawless-on his ideas for decentralizing program operations with essentially four separate USAID Mission programs and a federal country-wide program. We were caught up in the stream of Nigeria's evolution and the tensions of regional separatism that led to the civil war. The four regions with each one combining distinctive and dominant ethnic, economic, and political systems were unmanageable.

The program that we created in a very short space of time-1961-1965- was concentrated in the areas of education and agriculture and several infrastructure projects, private investment promotion and industrial development, and low cost housing finance.

In higher education at the time of Nigeria's independence (1960) there was only one university-the University of Ibadan and two or three post secondary colleges of arts and sciences. Sir Eric Ashby, a prominent British educator and his Commission had just completed its report on higher education that concluded that Nigeria did not require more than three university level institutions.

Out of that report and the interests of Dr Azikiwe, President of Nigeria grew our involvement in the creation of the University of Nigeria in the Eastern Region. Dr. John Hannah, who was President of Michigan State and later became USAID's administrator worked very closely with President Azikiwe in developing the concept of the University of Nigeria much like a land grant type of institution with a continuing education program, a community service orientation, and broad curriculum in contrast with a classical British university. The British Council of Higher Education was also involved in the tripartite planning arrangement. The Nigerians financed most of the buildings, by in large, out of the considerable sums the Eastern Region had from its cocoa earnings. We provided the technical assistance, including for a time the vice-chancellor, and helped create a university from the ground up.

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That was just one university project that we initiated during that period; there were many others. We had a contract with the University of Wisconsin to create the agriculture college at the University of Ife and a number of agricultural training centers. We also contracted with the University of Wisconsin to develop six teacher training colleges in the northern region of Nigeria. We had a contract with the University of Indiana to work on a communications/education program in the University of Ahmadou Bello; a contract with the University of Pittsburgh to develop an Institute of Public Administration in the Northern Region, at the same university. There was also a major contract with the University of Kansas to develop an agricultural college, a veterinary college, and a research program in the Northern Region also at the University of Ahmadou Bello.

We had a contract with NYU in public administration in the western region. A contract with the University of Western Illinois in the Western Region for the Ibadan Technical College. We had a contracts with the University of Ohio for teacher training colleges in the north at Kaduna and in the Western Region in Ibadan. Then there was a contract with UCLA to help build an Advanced Teacher Training College near Lagos, which later became the College of Education in the University of Lagos. (This was in collaboration with the UNDP and the Ford Foundation.)

UCLA was also involved in starting the Port Harcourt Comprehensive High School in the Eastern Region. There was a contract with Harvard to start the Comprehensive High School in the Western Region at Aiyetoro. The comprehensive high school idea, well known in the U.S., was an example of efforts to transfer an American “technology” to an environment that was not prepared for it; it was probably too complex to manage and ran counter to the traditional patterns of secondary education at that time; however, I do not know what happened to these schools. Finally in agriculture, there was a contract with Colorado State to develop a system of agricultural technical schools, training programs and extension services in the Eastern Region. In sum, it was a huge program of American institutional involvement in developing Nigerian education during the 1960s. Also to

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accelerate the preparation of Nigerians to take over teaching and research at these agricultural universities, several hundred Nigerians were sent to the U.S. for their graduate degrees, in addition to the ASPAU program mentioned earlier.

Apart from the agricultural universities, the USAID program included a number of projects in agricultural development such as well drilling, soil conservation, maize research, extension service training, rubber development and many other very specific direct technical assistance activities.

The program also included a major contract with Arthur D. Little for a series of activities in industrial planning and industrial project assessment, investment promotion, and small enterprise development. These were some of the first U.S. assistance projects in micro-enterprise development. Private investment promotion was also an important program priority at the time.

Infrastructure projects included the Calabar-Ikom road, the Ibadan Water System, Northern Nigeria Teacher Training Colleges, a telecommunications planning project, and hundreds of houses for use of USAID technicians in the field and Nigerian project staff. Housing was a major bottleneck to expanding the technical assistance program. We also provided technical assistance to the national census office-an area of extreme political sensitivity.

There was no program in the health. The Mission Director, along with a lot of other economists in those days, said that health was not priority, did not contribute to economic growth, although subsequently it has become the major area of U.S. assistance.

The Program Office staff and I were heavily involved in the planning, negotiating, and coordinating these activities which were well underway by the time of the first coup in January 1966. Each one of the projects that I have mentioned has its own interesting story in its successes and failures, along with its intertwining with political and economic events

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in the country. I have described the range of activity to illustrate what took place at that time.

In a later visit to Nigeria, I was asked what happened to “all that money; we see no evidence of it today.” It was my impression that the questioners did not know where to look; moreover, many of the projects like salt in water dissolved into the local scene and became invisible, although changing the flavor. Development is a dynamic process; facilities, institutions, and programs need to continue to grow and evolve along with the changing setting or they die. The USAID program in the early 1960s, I believe, responded to the critical needs at that time and laid the foundations for considerable development activity that took place later, although the civil war, the distortions of the oil bonanza, and subsequent economic crises were extremely disruptive to development processes.

Q: What was your impression, and your co-workers in USAID, about how the Nigerians responded to these things? Was there a problem with corruption? Was it difficult working with them?

NORTH: Well, I will have to think. There certainly was considerable corruption, but I don't recall that it was a major issue at that time except for the census; petty corruption was, of course, common. However, our procedures were excruciatingly demanding much to the frustration of Nigerian officials. There were problems of nepotism, perhaps, more than anything else that contributed to the tensions over the control of the federal government. A population census at that time, which we were assisting, was to be used both to determine how the parliament was structured, but also how federal revenues were to be allocated. The census was never issued because its findings were so divisive, i.e., if valid. There were many accusations of corruption in the census taking processes.

While we had a number of good friends at the personal level whom we enjoyed, we found official Nigerians very strenuous to work with. They were exceptionally aggressive, outspoken, provocative and very entrepreneurial in manner-like many Americans, although

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this varied by region. Yet despite these characteristics, we had an excellent rapport with the government officials and were able to accomplish a great deal-largely because, I'm sure, we were on the same wavelength on development priorities. Life in Lagos, in particular, owing to the crowds and severe congestion, the pushiness of the local drivers and those on the street, the breakdown of the power and telephone systems and other services was very demanding and tense.

My USAID and Embassy co-workers were on the whole a top notch group. Because of my position and the Program Office's work on program strategies and economic assessments, I worked closely with Embassy staff and came to know the Ambassadors well, particularly Joseph Palmer and Elbert Matthews. They were both men of exceptional competence and integrity. I developed the highest respect for their leadership and, no doubt, subtly learned from them. This respect grew when I was associated with them during the Nigerian civil war-Matthews as Ambassador to Nigeria during the war and Palmer as the Assistant Secretary for Africa. My USAID colleagues were also very able, but, as one can visualize, the pressures of deadlines and horrendous paperwork chores, the tensions arising from competition for resources and the complexity of the Nigerian situation were considerable with the Program Office in the middle. There were about 80 of us in the headquarters.

The only major issue I can remember in which we had a major difference with Ambassador Palmer and the Embassy, was the Nigerian government's interest in having a steel mill. I guess the Russians finally helped them build it. We were dead set against it and thought it was a disastrous project from an economic and technological point of view. The last thing we wanted to do with our aid money was get involved in that project no matter how politically attractive, but I think we did agree to provide a very high level executive from the U.S. steel industry to come out and discuss with the Government the pros and cons of building a steel mill.

Q: What is a direct hire?

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NORTH: They are U.S. government employees rather than contractors. We had the major university programs that I just described, but at the same time we had numerous technical assistance projects staffed with direct hire employees. Up to that time, from Point Four program days into the ICA period, much of the technical work was carried out by U.S. government employees. These were people who had a career with USAID coming from other government departments or newly hired. After my time in Nigeria, there was a major policy shift to reduce direct hire employment and shift to contract services. As a consequence, there was a major shift in USAID's style of operations. Over the years you hear people lamenting the loss of the USAID's technical capacity. Well, it started then when this major shift was made to terminate and discontinue the use of direct employment for technical assistance expertise.

I should add that during this time in Nigeria the Peace Corp program was building up. The Peace Corp staff and many of the volunteers had a rather contemptuous attitude towards USAID technical assistance personnel and repelled any form of cooperative relationships, for example, preferring to walk rather than accept rides in USAID vehicles traveling in the rural areas.

Q: You were in Nigeria really before the oil hit it and had pretty disastrous effects.

NORTH: Oh, yes, it was very disastrous in many ways...having that much money that quickly. During the last year I was in Nigeria, we had arranged for a study of Nigeria's balance of payments and economic trends. This resulted in a very interesting report that was written by two economists-Wilson Schmidt (deceased) of VPI and Scott Pearson, now at Stanford Food Research Institute and then a graduate student. The title of their report was "There's A Tiger In Their Tank". They had talked to oil company executives whose companies were doing a lot of drilling and exploration work in the Eastern Region; they extrapolated from that information the implications for oil revenues. This may not be entirely accurate, but it is my impression that this report gave the Nigerians their first

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indication of the tremendous scale of the oil resources that were available to the country and the implications for major revenue and income generations.

During the time when I was working in Nigeria, the country was largely self sufficient in food and a major exporter of agricultural products-principally cocoa, palm oil, groundnuts. Agriculture was a major industry and employer. However, when oil revenues began to flow, the Government spent and wasted enormous sums-in the billions-on construction and the support of the rapid growth in number of states with their concomitant demands for government facilities. This massive flow of resources into construction drew people away from farm production in the rural areas disrupting the country's economic base. Agriculture was de-emphasized, the university programs we had supported were underfunded; imports of food expanded exponentially. In recent times with the decline in oil revenues and the recognition of the economic disruptions that had occurred, there has been some return to agricultural development activity.

A sabbatical at Harvard's Center for International Affairs-1965

Q: Well, you left there in early 1965?

NORTH: We left Nigeria in the summer of 1965 and went to Harvard for a year. I remember giving a talk at an informal bag lunch about Nigeria and its future; the report was very upbeat about Nigeria's prospects. The next month there was the coup of January 1966. This is one of the pitfalls one gets into when one tries to make predictions. We were aware of the serious tensions and conflicts in the country, but we believed, based on passed situations, that the Nigerian leaders would somehow work them out just before it was too late. We were wrong. The country still has a tremendous potential over the long term but the problems are enormous and growing. However, it was disconcerting to have given this up-beat talk and a couple of weeks later find the country falling apart.

I had been selected to go to the Harvard Center for International Affairs as the first USAID representative to that program. Harvard had had this program for some time. They brought

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in people who had careers in the Foreign Service and military, mostly, to spend a year pursuing what they believed would be helpful in their future work-a refresher program. You were considered a member of the staff; you were not allowed to take courses for credit, but you could audit any course you wished. The Center had an excellent program of seminars with eminent leaders and faculty on international political, economic and development issues. It was an extraordinary experience.

There were 16 of us from USAID, USIA, and State...two eventually became ambassadors... one each from the Air Force, the Navy and Army. The Air Force representative was a leader in Air Force planning. The Navy's officer had just come from being the Captain of the aircraft carrier Enterprise. The Army officer, a very thoughtful person, was a Colonel in the infantry, who subsequently went to Vietnam and was killed there. Then there was an international group from the UK (Foreign Service), Pakistan (Tax Administration Executive), India (State Power Company manager), France (Foreign Service), Ethiopia (Senior Government Official in exile), Brazil (leading economist), etc. It was an interesting group of people who had been senior officials and diplomats in their governments. We had a year taking courses individually but with seminars together. It was a very stimulating year enabling me to catch up on various subjects and stretch my mind. We were exposed to a number of very knowledgeable people in international development and political and security affairs. I recall being awed by the dazzling brilliance of some of the faculty and guest speakers but also struck by the absence of expressions of values.

Director for Central and West Africa: the Korry Report, Ghana Debt Crisis, the Nigerian Civil War-1966

Then I went back to Washington and became Director for Central and West Africa Affairs, a geographical subdivision in the African Bureau. This covered all the 22 countries from Zaire to Mauritania. It was a large area, although our involvement in Francophone Africa was small. We were just beginning to have some activities in those countries. We had a

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substantial program in Zaire, of course, at that time, as well as Nigeria, as I mentioned. We had a program in Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc. It was a lot to keep track of.

Impact of the Korry Report This assignment took place about the time of Ambassador Korry's report (Review of Development Policies and Programs in Africa, 1966), which recommended that aid be concentrated in a few countries (ten were identified) in Africa and regional programs might be employed elsewhere. Earlier General Lucius Clay had reviewed U.S. assistance program world-wide and expressed the view that the European countries should carry the aid burden in most of Africa-"the U.S. is overextended in resources and under-compensated in results." Also Congress led by Senator Fulbright was determined to limit the number of countries being assisted by the U.S.-12 with supporting assistance and 26 with development assistance. He believed that such assistance got us involved in escalating commitments to a country as with Vietnam. The pendulum of support for African development had swung from expansion to contraction-but not for long.

As the Central and West Africa area for which I was assigned responsibility included many of the countries, largely francophone, where bilateral programs were to be terminated, we had a challenge in implementing the recommendations. The door was left open for regional programs which provided an opportunity for a number of projects as long as they served more than one country; many of these program were developed with State Department encouragement. One of the largest was the program funded through the Entente Fund based in the Ivory Coast which served five francophone countries in agriculture and livestock development. There were also a number of other regional projects. The legal and policy maneuvering required to preserve and develop these regional programs-when was a program regional and not bilateral?-absorbed a great deal of time.

In the process of developing these regional programs for West Africa, I and others put forward the thought that the U.S. should emphasize linking West African countries in a common development effort. None of them, particularly the francophone countries, were

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likely to achieve significant development without close economic ties on trade, investment, transportation, communications, etc. with each of the coastal states and with each other. This idea was scoffed at as not being practical or feasible, which still seems to be the case even with the formation of the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS)

However, my time became largely focused on two countries- Ghana and Nigeria. Ghana and debt reschedulings

My work on Ghana started just two years after Nkrumah had been overthrown and the country was going through a major economic structural adjustment. We didn't call it that in those days, but economic reform with debt rescheduling was a major issue. I became involved in the debt rescheduling meetings. For some reason in those days State and Treasury allowed USAID to take the lead on debt rescheduling issues. My predecessor- Dick Cashin- started the U.S. participation in the rescheduling meetings, and I picked it up after he left. I had people from Treasury and the Economic Bureau from State, working with me on the debt rescheduling exercise. It was one of the first of this kind. This was before the Paris Club on debt reschedulings had been set up. It was a fascinating experience.

I had to do a lot of fast learning...to learn about the esoteric aspects of debt negotiations and rescheduling, determining what the debt was...Ghana at that time had about \$800 million in debt that it was unable to pay- mostly short term and medium term debt. There were issues of how much leeway creditors should give the Ghana Government, what the schedule arrangements would be, and getting the European creditors to agree. A lot of the debt was in the form of suppliers credits, which were eight-year high interest credits. They were used for a number of terrible projects that the Europeans had sold the Ghanaians such as cocoa silos that were never used, tomato paste and other factories that never functioned, etc.

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The Ghanaians had thought, and been advised by international economists during the early days of the Nkrumah period, that industrialization was the way to development. But the country didn't have the economic and technological base for it nor the infrastructure; the Government was, in effect, being ripped off by Western and Eastern European supplier/creditors. When Ghana became independent, the country had half a billion dollars of sterling reserves from their cocoa marketing; Nkrumah went through that in a hurry. Then there was another \$500 million dollars in credits for these industrial activities. The greedy Western and Eastern European governments with their export credits and government guarantee programs enabled the suppliers to make major equipment sales and undertake major turn-key projects at little or no risk to the suppliers. The result was a lot of very bad deals, some of which were corrupt-a point of major contention later on. When Nkrumah was overthrown, the Government attempted to pay off the debt, but couldn't do it. As a consequence, there was a long process of determining the size and make up of the debt as there was no systematic record keeping as each government agency made its own deals. The rescheduling went on in several stages.

I remember leading a delegation with people from the Economic Bureau and Treasury to one of these debt rescheduling conferences in London. The UK, as the principal creditor, chaired the meetings. We had 12 creditors, who were hard-nosed, tough, poker playing types, sitting around the table with the Ghanaian representative. Everybody had their positions and held their cards closely. It was a very curious affair because during the meetings and negotiations agreements had to be reached on what debt would be included, what would be the grace period, what would be the interest rate during the grace period, what would be the repayment period, and endless other components of the debt process. Each creditor was trying to end up in a favorable position for his government. Being from USAID, I was under instructions to get the most beneficial terms, i.e., long repayment periods and low interest rates, that would assist Ghana's development, while the others were Treasury types who were determined to give Ghana the minimum debt

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relief possible. They didn't want to let the Ghanaians off-the-hook by allowing them to pay off their debts over the long term.

It was an interesting process; the US position was particularly awkward because we had a very small amount of this debt, less than \$1.0 million-we were really a minor player. Our only major debt was for the Volta Dam and that was a long-term debt and was not included in the rescheduling process. We had the awkward position of trying to argue that we should be excluded from the debt rescheduling under a "de minimus rule" because we were so minor. But at the same time, we were pressing the other creditors to be generous. Along with the World Bank Representative we tried to place the debt rescheduling in the context of development resources as a form of long term aid to help meet balance of payments deficits. The other creditors would have none of it, which has been the U.S. Treasury's position for many years as well.

It was an interesting and tough negotiating process. I recall the French representative participating throughout the negotiations in English in a relatively constructive manner. And then just before adjournment, he blasted the whole process and terms in a fiery diatribe in French. Clearly his instructions were to be helpful and not block the process while showing strong French Government opposition to the rescheduling because of precedents for Francophone countries. The U.S. position was also constrained by our interest in obtaining British support for tough terms in a Colombia rescheduling where we were the major creditor while the U.K. was the major creditor in Ghana. This was a small but interesting example of the inter-relatedness of foreign policy actions that I came to experience over and over in many different settings.

These debt rescheduling exercises were repeated two or three other times. In fact, there was one more round which took place in Ghana, but that is stepping ahead a bit. The debt issue hung over Ghana's relationship with the U.S. into the mid-70s and was a constant stumbling block for the assistance program, even though Ghana in the early days had been a favored country.

Nigerian civil war and relief operations

My work on Ghana and the other West African countries was soon overwhelmed by the Nigerian civil war, the Biafran struggle. When I returned to Washington in the summer of 1966, the civil war had just started and was beginning to build up. The relief crisis was becoming a major issue. There was the major foreign policy question of defining the strategy of how we maintained our relationships with the Nigerian Federal government and Biafra. I was involved for USAID in trying to restructure our assistance policy in a way that would keep the development program from being terminated. The first move on our part was the development of a revised strategy for assistance which I called approximately the "Restricted Assistance Strategy for Nigeria." Its purpose was to define what we could and could not do with the USAID program during the war with the aim of preserving as much as possible of the long range assistance activities and defending the program against those who thought we should terminate it.

Q: This was a period when there were tremendous political pressures on us from, I suppose you could call them Liberal ranks. Even show business got into the support of Biafra.

NORTH: That is right except the pressures were from both the left and right in an extraordinary coalition of private interest groups. The outcry seemed to reflect, in part, pent up frustrations spilling over from the Vietnam War. Biafra had declared its "independence" in May 1967 following months of negotiations aimed at resolving the dispute. Americans including many USAID personnel were evacuated from Enugu in October 1967. The first appeal for relief was announced in November 1967 by the Nigerian Red Cross with a committee to coordinate the work of voluntary agencies; and in December 1967, USAID authorized Catholic Relief Service to make the first allocation of food assistance. From that time on until the early months of 1970, the disruption of masses of people in the Eastern Region grew in scale and intensity as a consequence of the Federal Government's blockade of Biafra and the gradual military encirclement and squeezing of the Biafran

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territory by Federal troops. And with this disruption came the most extraordinary outcry in Europe and the U.S. to provide relief to those, particularly within Biafra, who were suffering and dying from famine and disease. I don't believe there has been anything quite like the breadth and depth of feeling about a crisis of this kind before or since, although one might include the African-wide famines, or the Somalia and Bosnia crises as comparable—although these crises don't seem to have the breadth and intensity of feeling that we experienced during the Biafran affair. Unlike today there was never any question of foreign military intervention and the United Nations was not acceptable for either peace negotiations or relief operations as “this was an internal affair.” The U.S. Government became the principal coordinator working through the ICRC and non-governmental organizations. The U.S. voluntary agencies had joined forces in a unique arrangement called Joint Church Aid (JCA) with Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish relief organizations participating.

The Biafrans had been very effective in getting a public relations group to tell their story. This was one of the first times we had anything of that kind on television other than Vietnam. There were great fears about famine and possible genocide. Both the facts about the numbers at risk as could be determined and the propaganda distortions stimulated a massive pressure to do something. The public sympathies were largely with the Biafrans, although the U.S. Government policy initially was more supportive of the Nigerian Federal Government.

Over this period, essentially from 1966-70, I experienced four years of probably the most frantic and intense pressures one can experience. While I was involved from the outset, I was appointed USAID's coordinator of relief operations with a working group of specialists in food assistance, health, logistics, and legal matters. This took place in November 1968 when the USAID disaster assistance office reached the limits of its resources and legal mandate (disasters were only to last 60 days at that time and rehabilitation 90 days). My job was to coordinate in Washington the full range of relief activities for both sides of the conflict funded by USAID and liaise with the State Department and private groups. Under

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Secretary Nicholas Katzenbach was responsible for the overall coordination of the U.S. relations with Nigeria and relief politics during this early period; Elliot Richardson filled the same role as Under Secretary during the Nixon Administration.

In October 1968, I, along with Stephen Tripp, USAID Disaster Relief Coordinator, and Ed Marks, USAID Coordinator in London and subsequently in Nigeria, traveled throughout the federally held territory in the Eastern Region (we were not allowed to enter Biafra) to survey relief requirements and report to Assistant Secretary Palmer who was visiting Nigeria and would be meeting with General Gowon. We prepared a lengthy report on the conditions in the war area, the requirements for food and other aid, and alternative logistic plans, particularly addressing the question of deliveries within Biafra. We also prepared a brief report addressed to Assistant Secretary Palmer which he could use in his meeting General Gowon in an effort to persuade Gowon about the seriousness of the relief needs in the area. It was a carefully balanced presentation of some graphic descriptions of the desperate circumstances of starving people (which Gowon claimed could not be true) with a positive tone about some improvements resulting from Government relief efforts (so as not to offend government sensitivities). The aim was to increase Federal Government cooperation in addressing the humanitarian crisis in the area and restrain the excesses of military operations. I should note that, during our survey, we visited one of the Nigerian army commands and found that they were doing a reasonably effective job in delivering food to those facing food shortages as the troops closed in on the Biafran area.

In November 1968 following this review of the relief situation, my working group and I prepared a report to the Assistant Administrator for Africa and Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. I recommended "a reexamination of the overall approach to the Nigerian dilemma. Nothing short of a cease-fire and negotiations with both sides giving higher priority to human well-being will halt the worsening starvation and tragedy for an estimated 5-6 million in Biafra and about 2 million in Federal areas." I suggested that "a new approach based on humanitarian grounds alone to: strongly support the FMG; provide safeguards for acceptance and reintegration of Ibos with the right of recourse to

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independent arbiters (a major reconstruction and recovery program for the East and other parts of Nigeria would help ease hostilities); use whatever means short of force to stop arms shipments to Biafra and demonstrate through some international forum that Biafran insistence on secession at the expense of its people's lives will not be supported." As a first step, I suggested, "a full and frank presentation of facts to the American public to win U.S. endorsement of a negotiated solution within the framework of a united Nigeria. Also I recommended "stepping up substantially the relief operation and preparing to ensure the rapid recovery of economic life within the war-torn area." Subsequent to this memorandum, my staff and I were asked by Under Secretary for Economic Affairs Rostow to prepare a policy paper on Nigerian relief. The policy paper provided details on a possible U.S. position on Nigeria, the numbers at risk and food requirements, the surveillance system for monitoring malnutrition and health concerns, funding requirements, etc. I don't recall that there was any specific response to the memorandum or to the policy paper or follow-up action.

Initially under President Johnson the U.S. policy had been "one Nigeria." We would not support any attempt to split up the country. Then Nixon became President in 1969 and the word "one Nigeria" was dropped. Because of the tremendous public support for Biafra, U. S. policy became more ambivalent about Biafra's secession and the principle of "One Nigeria." and the uncertainties about the outcome of the war. (I believe that Nixon was somewhat partial to the Ibos but largely wanted to do whatever was necessary "to get the issue off my back.") At the request of Kissinger (then National Security Advisor to the President) the State Department was asked to prepare a NSSM (National Security Strategy Memorandum) for the President and cabinet on the future policy of the U.S. towards Nigeria and the relief crisis. I recall spending many hours working with Roy Melbourne (State), Roger Morris (White House), Dick Kennedy (Defense) and possibly others on this NSSM. The main theme of the NSSM was that our primary interest and objective for Nigeria/Biafra was humanitarian. The memorandum laid out U.S. national interests, alternative policy objectives with pros and cons, the relief requirements, and the

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alternative ways in which emergency aid could be provided. It was clear to me that the volume of food alone that was required was far beyond any logistical arrangement that would be feasible without a cease-fire and direct access to the Biafran area. I also recall that among the pros and cons presented for each option was one about whether support for Biafran independence would lead to a “domino effect” throughout Africa and, thus, an argument for not leaning towards Biafran succession.

The public and Congressional demand for action continued to mount. This led to the appointment of Dr. Clyde Ferguson as the U.S. Government Relief Coordinator with the special mandate to find a way to overcome the impasse on food deliveries into Biafra without becoming involved in the political/military dispute. It was an impossible task which he carried out valiantly. It involved endless negotiations with both sides on various options such as special airlifts, road and river corridors. It, for example, included a million dollar contract with LST operators with Cuban crews to move food from Lagos to the Calabar River port to be trucked into Biafra-the LSTs never left the Lagos and returned to the U.S. without delivering a bag of food. Both the Federal Government and Biafrans sought in these negotiations to place the blame on the other for lack of concern for the starving people while objecting to various approaches put forth on the grounds of providing some political/military advantage. Many others had tried to accomplish a breakthrough on relief deliveries over the previous months and had failed. President Nixon said when making the announcement of Ferguson's appointment that “the main problem is the absence of relief arrangement acceptable to the two sides which would overcome the limitations posed by the present hazardous and inadequate nighttime airlift...” The ICRC and the JCA were making night flights from Equatorial Guinea and Dahomey into a unlit airstrip in Biafra but the volume of food that could be delivered by this means was well below requirements. It was our job to track the flights and report to the White House each week the volume of food being delivered. USAID provided the main financing for the both the ICRC and JCA airlifts. We also supported a million dollar a month helicopter relief supply operation.

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One interesting sidelight to this airlift operation was the JCA's demand for the use of C-97 Cargo planes that the Air Force was about to destroy as surplus. (C-97s had a larger capacity than the DC-6s the JCA was using. National Guard volunteer pilots were to fly the aircraft.) As A.I.D. was the only agency authorized to transfer U.S. Government property to private groups for overseas operations, I became involved in making arrangements with the Air Force. I remember calling a top official of the Air Force to make the request and describing what was wanted and why. His expletives and vehement protests were something to hear but understandable, something to the effect: "Who do these people think they are; what do they know about running an airlift, etc.?" and when I explained that the Air Force would also have to ensure a supply of spare parts for the planes, his protests were even more dramatic. I suggested that he might call Speaker McCormack, who was among those on the Hill supporting this request, about his objections. From that point on the arrangements to support the JCA airlift worked out quite well.

Q: We are talking about references to Somalia today where we have a military presence primarily to stop shooting warlords from creating a mass starvation there.

NORTH: Of course we were not involved militarily at that time. The U.S. policy was not to provide any military assistance to the Federal government, which made the Nigerian Government angry because it sounded like we were not supporting them. However, the Russians were supplying arms reportedly purchased by Nigeria. But, of course, we were not supplying the Biafrans either. We were attempting to find ways to restrict the arms flow, but I learned from this experience how extensive the worldwide black market in arms was and how difficult to control. (The French, who supported Biafra, were supporting an arms delivery airlift to Biafra using the same landing strip as our relief flights, which added to the political and operational complications.) Our interest was humanitarian and every effort we made was aimed at minimizing the humanitarian crisis. Of course, you can rarely separate the humanitarian from the political.

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Q: You had some really true believers in Congressional staff, as I recall, who were very strong on the Biafran side.

NORTH: Yes, and one of the Senators, Senator Goodall, visited Biafra and adopted a Biafran baby as a show of compassion and political zeal. At the time, I didn't think it was right for the baby. The Ibo people were attractive and effective. The emotional support for Biafra was extraordinary.

Q: Africa's borders are very arbitrary, but any readjustment is an absolute nightmare.

NORTH: That is right. That was a major policy issue, and like Vietnam and other places, the precedent was a concern that secession might have created a domino effect throughout the continent, as some believed. The issue of supporting Biafra was also tied up with the question of oil interests; the major part of the oil reserves in Nigeria were in the Eastern Region with substantial American oil company investments. Were our interests in these oil resources better protected by supporting Biafran secession or the preservation of Nigeria as one country? As I noted earlier, U.S. policy became somewhat ambiguous on this point.

My role was essentially related to trying to maintain a relief operation that was balanced and responded to the need wherever it was. I was not allowed to see Biafran relief representatives when they came to Washington for fear that, as a U.S. Government official, I would signal a bias in their favor. However, the policy was not consistent on this as others did meet with them; and we arranged to have contract specialists visit Biafra to survey the food situation.

The Biafran relief operation became more difficult to address as the area was increasingly circled and compressed. As a consequence, there were constant pressures for information: how many people are there, how many are starving, how many dying, what were the food requirements; how much food was available locally? This numbers game

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persisted throughout the four years of the emergency. Public and political leaders always wanted to know how many were starving and how many were dying. In a situation like this, there are the real facts, which are extremely difficult to determine, and the political “facts” promoted by those interested in under- or overestimating the numbers. There were claims of 14 million people at risk and in need of food; others such as our intelligence community reported that those numbers were grossly exaggerated claiming only about one million were at risk. So we were constantly faced with people who were very genuinely concerned but overly influenced by one side of the issue or the other on the scale of the need. The major concern was trying to convince the Federal Government that there was a serious problem of starvation and a potentially massive death resulting from the war.

There were innumerable tensions among the relief agencies and with the Federal Government. The Federal Government would complain that these “do-gooders” were coming in and taking over and telling them to get out of the way. “After all this is our country; what are you doing here?” It was a very, very tense situation with various relief officials being ousted. And, yet, the Federal Government tolerated the continuance of the relief operation. It was my aim along with the USAID Mission to get Nigerians more involved in the relief operations and use our resources to achieve this, primarily through the Nigerian Red Cross.

As the war began to move against Biafra in 1969 and Biafra began to shrink in size and collapse, the international hysteria reached new levels of concern about the potential for genocide, that the Federal troops would go in and wipe out the Ibo people. We had to do something to stop them. We had to respond to the Federal Government in a way that would prevent this from happening. We knew by December, 1969 that the collapse was imminent; something needed to be done; so new contingency plans were developed. (We were always doing contingency plans.) Then in January, 1970, it became quite clear that the crisis was coming to a head; we needed to respond in a major way to the Federal Government to demonstrate that we were supporting the relief effort, helping them as a way of moderating this fear that there would be genocide (A fear that was exaggerated

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and not borne out, in fact, although it has been estimated that a million people lost their lives from the time of the earliest riots in the North.) Even so, there clearly would be a need for substantial assistance to help the masses of people dislocated by the war. As a consequence, there was considerable pressure within the U.S. that the Government demonstrate its concern and do something. The Administration wanted to demonstrate, because of the political outcry in the United States...Nixon and Kissinger wanted a demonstration that we were doing something. As the emotions mounted, it was clear we had to have some dramatic action, which led to the idea of a major airlift of relief and rehabilitation supplies. At the same time, the Federal Government had been meeting with the USAID Director Mike Adler laying out its needs and taking advantage of the domestic pressures in the U.S. to do something.

Mike Adler was at the one end of the phone and cable traffic and I at the other. He went to the Government and they said that they wanted this, this, and this, etc. And the demands grew bigger and bigger with "we want" ...80 more 5 ton trucks, 400 generators of all kinds, 10,000 blankets, 10,000 lanterns, nearly complete power stations, etc. Of course, the word was getting out through the system to the White House that these requests were coming in: "How are you responding? Have you got it done? How are you going to get it there?" Because the requirements for trucks in particular were too large for commercial C-130s, it was suggested that we use C-141s-Starlifters-from the Military Air Transport Service. At a press briefing this idea leaked this out, but the Air Force had not been told. The Air Force officials heard it over the evening news for the first time and were very upset. We had started some informal planning with them but all that stopped until the Air Force received direct instructions from the White House.

They went up through the Defense Secretary to the White House and said: "Absolutely not. We are not doing anything until we get an order from the President that we have to do this." Part of the problem that upset the Air Force officials was that the Nigerians had

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said: "You cannot bring in any military flights here unless you paint out the US Air Force insignia." Well, that made the Air Force absolutely furious.

Meanwhile, I had been in the process of locating 80 or so 5-ton trucks, blankets, lanterns, generators. I learned very quickly you don't buy 5-ton trucks ready to go. They have to be assembled. You buy a chassis here and a body there, etc. Fortunately, I found somebody-David Paulsen-to work with me. He had helped us with earlier relief flights such as delivering two or three dozen jeeps by air. He was a brilliant logistics transport person. He worked with me and got on the phone and called around the country to find these trucks. Meanwhile Kissinger had joined in the act because the Nigerians were making such a point about the need for trucks; the word came down: "Give them what they want." I found that he was calling up truck companies as well.

In the process, UNICEF said, "Well, we have a dozen trucks that you can have." But they didn't tell me they were unassembled and all in boxes in pieces. I could see them being delivered in Lagos in parts and somebody thinking, "Well, what do I do now? How do I put these things together?" But we said we would take them. Meanwhile, we contacted people all over the country who said, "Well, we have a couple of 5-ton trucks here that we have ready to give to our customers. They have already been bought, but you can have them if you want them. For the cause we are willing to do this." So we had a number of trucks volunteered, but they were all over the U.S. Then International Harvester said, "Well, we have 20 5-ton chassis in Pennsylvania, stake bodies in Texas, tarpaulins elsewhere, etc. If we can get these together why you can have them." I said, "Okay, we will take them." We arranged a deal with Chrysler, through Dr. Hannah, the Administrator, who called the president of Chrysler motors, who agreed to set up an assembly line for us in Pennsylvania. We had the truck components come from all over the country to this place where they assembled them, including the UNICEF trucks.

Meanwhile the Air Force arrangement was stirring and the word was out that we had to get all these supplies to Nigeria in the next ten days so; we had to get going. The Air Force

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was saying, still furious, "We are ready, where are you? Where is the stuff?" I said that it was all over the country and gave them a list. Their planning people developed a plan for how to pick up the trucks, generators, etc. Then the assignment was turned over to the Military Air Transport people who were the real operators. They threw out the plans and said they were not going to do it that way. We were told to deliver the equipment to specific locations around the country and the MATs would then pick it up. So we arranged with all the suppliers to deliver to Air Force bases throughout the country. The MATs then shuttled the equipment and trucks into Charlottesville and then over to Cape Verde where another plane was ready with the insignia, vaguely "painted out", for the flight to Nigeria. Meanwhile, the trucks were coming off the assembly line at three a day just as fast as we were getting flights off to carry the equipment. At the same time, the MATS insisted that we have USAID personnel at each supply point to monitor their shipments. I recall that at the start of the operation my colleague had told me that everything ready to go. I understood that to mean that the airlift was underway. I went to a church meeting that evening during which I received a call from the MATS contact. He said we are waiting for your ok to proceed; we don't go without USAID's signal as you are responsible for the operation. So I called my colleague who said everything is ready to go. So I called the MATS contact back and said proceed with the airlift. He next morning at 6 am I received a frantic call from Mike Adler in Lagos saying that he did not have Nigerian Government approval for the flights to land. I, in effect, said Mike it is too late now the planes are on their way. With his talent for working with the government, he was able to get clearance just before the planes landed. And within two weeks we delivered 63 trucks (more by sea), 10,000 blanks, 10,000 lanterns, 400 hundred generators, etc. from all over the country on 21 C-141 sorties-USAID was charged \$750,000 by MATS. Large quantities of food and medical supplies had already been delivered sometime before; the problem was to more it. It was an extraordinary operation. Shortly after, Deputy Secretary Elliot Richardson had to testify about what we had done to meet the crisis. So our office put together an extensive list of statistics on what we had delivered. The testimony went well and he was pleased.

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Whether it did any good or not, whether the equipment was used effectively or not, I don't know; but it made the political statement of our responsiveness to the requests and, perhaps, tempered the Nigerian Government's actions against the Biafrans. That was the crest of the crisis. After that we tapered off and moved into a more structured rehabilitation operation. I left the operation in June 1970 and waited for my assignment to Ghana.

Mission Director for USAID in Ghana-1970

This appointment was held up for about 5-6 months because of the White House political clearance process that was required at that time. The Nixon administration went deeper into government personnel systems to establish republican credentials than most administrations. I was not a registered republican. However, the Ghanaian Ambassador to the United States, Kojo Debra, with whom I had worked on the Ghana debt and other economic issues, interceded with the White House complaining of the delay. His action freed up my appointment and my family and I were on our way to Ghana in November 1970, considerably later than I had expected.

Q: We will pick that up next time. Great. Haven, as a non-economist, non-development person let me ask a question. What was in it? You said that everybody was lined up ready to give aid to Ghana. What was in it for first world countries to give aid to Ghana? Why was their eagerness to get involved?

NORTH: That is an interesting question. I think part of the answer lies in the fact that Ghana was looked upon at that time as a leader in Africa, one of the first to achieve independence. It had, of course, very articulate leadership including Nkrumah's leadership of the Pan African Movement and the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Although his rule deteriorated resulting in his overthrow in 1966, he left a legacy of Ghana being one of the leading countries in Africa. The principal competitor for this role was Nigeria, which also was a major recipient of external assistance. But Nigeria was quite preoccupied with itself so it was not as identified with Africa-wide leadership as Ghana

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had been at that time. Ghana had, of course, a history of considerable British investment in education at the higher levels with a prominent university and many Ghanaians in U.K. universities. When I was there we were working with the second, possibly the third generation of highly educated people. The Ghanaians are very articulate, very outgoing, hospitable and, of course, just delightful people to work with. They were quite popular on the world scene, at that time.

At the time of independence (1957), Ghana was relatively well endowed and had substantial resources in sterling reserves and gold mining and cocoa exports. Thus for the early years after independence, Ghana was attractive, in part because of these resources, to those within and outside the country who favored rapid modernization and industrialization, following the prevailing development theory of that era and the lure of Western export sales opportunities. It was at that time also that the United States was heavily involved in the construction of the hydro-electric power plant-the Volta Dam-on the Volta River at the urging of Kaiser Industries, which was constructing an aluminum smelting plant-VALCO-in Ghana's port city of Tema. The relatively low cost power from the dam was the key to the smelting operations. Because of the major private US investment involved and the appeal of the dam which had World Bank backing, both President Eisenhower and President Kennedy became involved in approving US participation with financial assistance and a political risks guarantee. This added to the visibility of Ghana in high level circles of the U.S. Government.

Ghana was a symbol of Africa and African leadership when the U.S. was becoming more aware of the continent. Also the U.S. was experiencing a growing interest in assisting the underdeveloped countries of the world. "A new direction" in assistance policy was unfolding; a major shift in the rationale for assistance...the alleviation of poverty by direct assistance rather than relying on indirect "trickle down" from general economic growth. As a consequence, assistance to Africa was generally expanded. I will come to that when I get to the next stage. But it, in general, was the growing momentum of the U.S. discovery of Africa in the early sixties, the attractions of independence movements, and

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the beginning of American relationships with the continent, that, in addition to Ghana's own attractiveness, helped to place Ghana high on donor lists.

My task, shortly after arriving in Ghana, was to reorient the program from a traditional technical assistance program with a large number of individual specialists, with many U.S. Government employees located throughout the country (29 different posts), to one largely focused on economic policy reform, balance of payments assistance, and debt reschedulings working closely with the IMF, World Bank and other major bilateral donors. This was during the time (1970-71) of President Busia's administration following a return to a democratic government.

Q: In those days we were always keeping an eye on the Soviets and what they were doing. Was that a factor in the 1970-76 period when you were there?

NORTH: Well, Soviet influence was something of a factor but relatively minor in my recollection. If there was anything going on in Ghana, it was largely clandestine with links to some of the dissident groups.

Q: In other words, you weren't looking over your shoulder...if we don't do this the Soviets will do that?

NORTH: Right, but it was an overriding rationale for everything you did. It was assumed that if you relaxed anywhere, the Soviet influence would move in. In Ghana, during Nkrumah's time, an important part of the country's industrialization and its indebtedness problems resulted from deals with the Eastern Bloc countries and with the Soviets in barter arrangements (cocoa for equipment) greatly to Ghana's disadvantage. I mentioned the Yugoslav tomato paste factory, the Czechoslovakian tire factory, large imports of useless farm tractors, etc.

Q: Designed for a different type of...

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NORTH: Yes, they just didn't fit the situation. Among the embarrassments were the large piles of Eastern European farm equipment which had never been used and was rusting away. (We made an inventory for the Government with the view to seeing how much could be repaired and used for farm machinery centers...not much, as it turned out.) So I think the subsequent administrations in Ghana after the Nkrumah period were a bit chary about relationships with the Soviet Bloc countries because of these bad barter deals. The Soviets, however, were never 100 percent off the stage, they were nibbling around the edges and with the coups and other instabilities in the African countries, there were always opportunities. Soviet influence became a major issue subsequently during the early period when Colonel Rawlings took over and was flirting with the Libyans and the Soviets. But that was after my time. Of course, the Soviets were more active in other parts of Africa such as Guinea (off and on), Angola and Mozambique after independence, Somalia and later Ethiopia, and so on.

Q: Back to your time. The debt problem had more or less been solved and everybody was rushing off and we had a new look in the thrust of our foreign aid. What did this mean?

NORTH: That's right. In 1972, Colonel Acheampong threw out the elected government of President Busia, while I was there; it was a bloodless coup largely explained as an "amenities coup" as the military had been squeezed pretty hard in the economic reforms of the Government that were being pressed on them by the IMF, World Bank and the donor community. We had \$30 million in PL 480 (agricultural commodities) and commodity assistance pending the implementation of the economic reforms which were very controversial in the government, particularly a major devaluation. When Acheampong took over the Government, he reversed the devaluation and repudiated the debt and declared that Ghana would be self-reliant; as a result, all external assistance was placed on hold. It took almost two years of painstaking negotiations to sort that out. At the Government's insistence, as part of its non-alignment policy, and much to the displeasure of the creditors, the last round of debt negotiations was held in Ghana. In order to ensure

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secrecy for the creditors caucus meetings to develop their position while in Ghana, I arranged for them to use a small office building behind our USAID headquarters building, after having it searched for “bugs” at French insistence. I recall writing Washington (just before the final debt agreements were signed in 1974, I believe) that the donors were lined up like restless, prancing horses at the gate waiting for the starting bell; eager to restore positive relations with the Ghana Government. The U.S. was one of them.

New Directions program in Ghana

At the same time and coincidental with the debt and aid question in Ghana, there was the U.S. shift in foreign assistance policy called “New Directions.” Our task in the field was to develop a New Directions, Basic Human Needs program. The “New Directions” philosophy repudiated the concept of “trickle down” economic growth. Essentially, what this meant in Ghana was a shift away from macro-economic reforms and balance of payments aid to assistance directed at the rural poor. We spent a lot of time working with the Government in trying to shape this program. While philosophically we were not far apart from the Ghanaians in the Acheampong administration, it was very hard to pin them down on what they wanted us to do or how to work out a program. There was, initially, considerable distrust by the Government of U.S. intentions resulting from our support of the earlier economic reforms. I remember the Government officials asking: “Where has all the money from commodity assistance and PL 480 gone that was provided during Busia's administration; what do we have to show for it?” The economic policy reform orientation to our program was no longer acceptable in Ghana and in Washington!

As a result, we took a fair amount of initiative in trying to work with the Ghanaians in the conceptualization of the type of program that fit Ghana's self-reliant policy and Washington's “New Directions.” I remember roughing this out and, when the Assistant Administrator Sam Adams came to Ghana, using his calls at the higher levels of the Government to establish a dialogue on future assistance. Because of the Ambassador's role, my access to the higher levels of Government, apart from the Ministry of Agriculture

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and Ministry of Economic Development was limited. A traditional USAID Mission Director/ Ambassador concern.

Q: The Ambassador was Fred Hadsel at that time, wasn't he?

NORTH: Yes, he was.

Q: He was there from 1971-74.

NORTH: Fred was a great ally and supporter. We had no real differences. It was probably just the tradition of the function. I recall Ambassador McElhiney in the earlier period questioning our efforts on economic reform. In retrospect, he may have been more right than anybody in saying that there was no point spending a lot of time on Ghana, it was just going down hill, while the rest of us were trying to push it back up hill. He, however, supported us in our negotiations with the Government. (For example, in trying to pin down a very elusive Minister of Finance who did not want to talk with us about economic reform actions-a precondition for release of the second tranche of our program loan. We did meet with him and were able to satisfy the conditions.)

The main point was that we had difficulties formulating a program with the Government which was still making up its own mind what it meant by self-reliance and the type of programs it wanted to carry out. The Government wasn't clear what it wanted. We continued working with the officials with Washington pressing for evidence of the program changes to the New Directions philosophy. It was a very formative but trying period. But, we did have a number of important projects that we had started before to build on, particularly in population and health.

One of our new projects was a multi-component agriculture project, which was a major effort to get the Ministry of Agriculture to articulate a program that we could help with. The Principal Secretary at that time-there were two-or three during my stay in Ghana-was not very communicative. This was very frustrating. Also the Ministers of Agriculture kept

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changing-4-5 during my time. Every time I was able to develop a rapport with a Minister of Agriculture, he would be removed and another one would come. So it was very hard to provide any continuity to our planning and negotiations. When I asked them what they wanted, I got a long list of equipment for research centers, some vehicles and things like that. None of it constituted a program. I said it wasn't acceptable; that we couldn't just provide a miscellaneous assortment of equipment. We had to have some kind of program with well defined objectives for what we were trying to accomplish together.

Eventually, we were able to put together a \$30 million multi-faceted project called Management Input Delivery of Agricultural Services-or MIDAS! I am afraid the acronym was a bit of an exaggeration. The project had components in credit, agricultural research, agricultural extension, agricultural development focused on women, fertilizer supply and seed production, studies of marketing strategies-all focused on small farmer development. The fertilizer component was intended to be a privatization of the fertilizer business to get it out of the Ministry of Agriculture. Similarly, the seed component was aimed at commercializing seed production outside of Government management. The project also included measures to strengthen decentralized agricultural credit administration.

My concept was to try to get something of sufficient size and scope that would attract attention, attract involvement, bring together the several project components and actors so that they could be mutually reinforcing rather than ad hoc and serve the objective of small farmer development. In the past at various times, we had worked a little bit on credit, a little bit on research, fertilizer distribution and so on without an overall framework. It took a long time to put this together, but we did; I still think it is a valid concept. My strategy was to attempt to develop the separate components, moving each ahead as they were ready while placing them in the overall framework of a large funded coordinated program addressing the needs of small farmers in selected parts of the country-an approach which did not fit well with USAID's programming processes and Congressional notifications requirements.

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But the project, really a program, met with a lot of problems. One of the problems ...and I won't tell you the story of delivering and bagging bulk fertilizer; that was a nightmare...a major problem was trying to get the Government to setup a private company to run the fertilizer distribution services. We had invited with Government agreement some representatives of private U.S. agricultural supplies cooperatives to explore this idea, design the system, and serve as a management contractor to get the company started in handling fertilizer procurement, supply and delivery outside of the Ministry of Agriculture. Well, we were ran smack into the vested interests of Government officials and departments. While the Government gave lip service to this change and we had the full support of the Central Bank, the privatization goal kept slipping away from us. Every time we thought we had an agreement and were moving in the right direction, why nothing would happen. It was very frustrating. It was clearly a classic case of trying to privatize an enterprise that had strong Government interests in controlling it. That was one major problem.

In the credit area, the country was moving into a period of high inflation; the country's economic situation was going down hill. (This helped scare off our private investor's interest in the fertilizer operation also.) As a consequence, the issue of viability of the credit scheme was increasingly present. We tried to make arrangements with Central Bank guarantees to avoid decapitalizing the credit program, but it was hard going, we were working against the rising tide of inflation. So developing the core components of this program was difficult.

However, the major problem came from another direction. We had worked at great length with the Government and the several Ministries and agencies involved in putting together and agreeing on the \$30 million MIDAS program. Then the word came that Secretary Kissinger was making trip in Africa and would be visiting Ghana. This was May 1976.

Q: He was Secretary of State by that time.

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NORTH: Yes. So obviously when you have somebody at that level coming you have to have something for him to sign, something for him to do. This seemed like an excellent opportunity for launching the M.I.D.A.S. program during his visit. So the Government accelerated its efforts to get all of its agreements and approvals completed in time. My colleagues on the Government side were very responsive and cooperative; we worked closely together and finished the negotiations and got the program agreements ready for signature. (At this time, Shirley Temple Black had become the Ambassador replacing Ambassador Hadsel.) We were poised for Kissinger's arrival. The advance parties for Kissinger's visit had come with all the elaborate equipment for Kissinger's communications and related support requirements. We had all been given our assigned jobs. My staff was converted into baggage handlers and that sort of thing, much to their distaste.

Then the Government said, "Don't come." It disinvited him. The excuse being that Colonel Acheampong was not well, he was sick. (The story was that he had a boil and could not sit down.) Kissinger had been in Zaire and had finished the Zaire trip and was ready to come on. It was very embarrassing. Ambassador Shirley Temple Black was negotiating with the Foreign Office trying to get a clear answer because the Government's decision was off again, on again, as to whether Kissinger should come or not. The Foreign Office favored the visit; others in the Government objected on the grounds that the Government was yielding to pressure from the U.S. Government and weakening its non-alignment stance. This debate went on for quite a while. Finally, the Ambassador gave them a deadline. The response never came, so the visit was canceled. Well, that, of course, infuriated Secretary Kissinger and was taken as a "slap -in-the-face" for the United States. As a consequence, the MIDAS project, on which we had worked for months and months, was suspended. Signing that agreement would have not been consistent with this insult to the U.S. So this major, long term, important development effort was suddenly pushed aside as a political demonstration of U.S. Government disapproval.

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Q: Was the cancellation of the visit a political move, the Colonel didn't want to be too close to the United States?

NORTH: I don't remember what all the reasons were. My impression was that Kissinger's visit conveyed an image of overwhelming Western influence at a time when the government was trying to assert itself and show it was not going to be pushed around, to show that it was non-aligned and self-reliant. I was never quite sure what all the motivations were. There were those who felt it was symbolically wrong, that we must stand on our own feet...the revolutionary, Marxist types who wanted a more radical government position, possibly aided by Soviet influences. What was directly involved in this, I don't know. About all I know is that there was the combination of feeling that they were overwhelmed or being pictured as being dominated by the U.S....Kissinger would be a very dominating factor in this; there were factions arguing strongly against this display of US interest in Ghana. (I have been told that the Nigerian Government was working behind the scenes, pressing the Government to cancel the visit. The Nigerians were objecting to U.S. policy on Angola.)

Q: From what I gather he was almost dragged kicking and screaming to Africa. He was not that interested in Africa.

NORTH: I am sure that is true. Neither Africa nor assistance to developing countries fell within the scope of his global strategizing. The cancellation, in fact, probably came at a propitious time for him because he became ill in Zaire and would have been in bad shape if he had come.

The incident was a minor speck in the world of international affairs, but for those involved in the program it was a traumatic situation. That was in the spring of 1976 and the program was put on hold with the exception of a few on-going activities. I was able to get agreement with the Embassy and Washington that we continue those programs we already had in the pipeline. It was the new commitment that we could not undertake,

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although this was the centerpiece of our program. Meanwhile the economy was continuing to go downhill, so the situation was not as attractive as when we started out to design this program. But it had been approved by Washington and we were ready to go. It was quite demoralizing given my staff's and my efforts to get a solid program underway.

I don't know what the timing was, but at some point during 1975, Dr. Sam Adams, the Assistant Administrator for the Africa Bureau, asked if I would be willing to come to Washington to be his deputy. I remember meeting him in London, walking down the street after dinner. He was talking about this position he would like me to take; but he implied that if I really wanted the job, I would have to register as a Republican to be cleared-not Dr. Adams' requirement. Well, I don't think I said anything one way or another at the time. The position appealed to me; however, I didn't like the idea of registering Republican just to be accepted. It didn't sit well with me at all; not just because I had to become a Republican, but because I had to play politics to get the job. So nothing came of it. But then Dr. Adams left and was replaced by Stan Scott as Assistant Administrator in the last year of the Republican administration under President Ford. I was sorry to see Dr. Adams leave; he had been very supportive; a thoughtful, knowledgeable and considerate administrator and friend.

Q: USAID in this period was highly political wasn't it?

NORTH: Political manipulation under Nixon was a very dominant factor at levels well below those normally considered appropriate for political appointments and clearances. That seemed to have changed under the Ford administration. In any event in the Spring of 1976, I received another request as to whether I would be interested in taking the job as Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa. I had been in Ghana almost six years at that point and increasingly discouraged about the future of the program in that country. So I left in May 1976 but not without mixed feelings. On the one hand, my family and I had many good Ghanaian friends and a warm memory of our time there. On the other hand, however, the situation with the Government, the deteriorating economy and the program

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on hold left me discouraged. "What had I been doing over the last six years? Had anything useful resulted from our work; anything worthwhile?"

Given repeated upheavals and corruption in political leadership,... and this is one of the themes that threads through much of my work experience.. development programs will not be successful. Positive, capable leadership which is committed to the development of a country is a sine qua non for development. Political policies not centered on development issues, whether internal to the developing country or as part of U.S. international policy, can undermine constructive development efforts. The political dynamics of a developing country as well as the rationale for donor assistance have to be addressed in ways that make them compatible with long-term development objectives. Otherwise the investment in development activities will be largely lost. This relationship, i.e., when development assistance is subordinated to the short-term political interests of either the donor or recipient or both, seems to be forgotten when the effectiveness of foreign assistance is challenged. The failures or weaknesses of a foreign assistance program are rarely related to the driving force of foreign policy demands that have, in fact, contributed to these failures or weaknesses.

In the past, the international community has been supersensitive about avoiding an "interventionist" approach in foreign policy, the concern about national sovereignty being compromised. Well, I have come to develop a feeling of "heck with the sovereignty issue" in certain situations. If the country can't manage itself and serve the interests of its people, then the sovereignty question should not be an impediment for action. Our support for unprincipled, corrupt leadership should not be sustained to achieve some tenuous political/security goal. But I think we are much more willing to confront the political issues of a country than we were in those days. Moreover, much of foreign assistance is interventionist in character, for example, population programs, although rarely portrayed as such. However, and in any event, little can be accomplished in the absence of capable, dedicated leadership with a broad-base of popular support.

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Q: Before we leave Ghana, two questions. Just to get a feel of the times because it became very political in the eighties, what were we doing concerning population controls?

NORTH: Population programming in Ghana. Ghana was the first country in Africa to adopt a comprehensive population policy (see its White Paper on Population about 1970). My predecessor along with representatives of the Population Council and the Ford Foundation had worked with the Government to develop an exceptionally farsighted population policy. This was quite a remarkable accomplishment in the African scene. They started a population program, one part of which was the Danfa Rural Health and Family Planning project-another story in its own right. There is a lot of documentation on that project. Essentially, the project focused on the question of research on how different interventions in family planning and health services could be interrelated to get the most effective acceptance of family planning services. Do you provide family planning services exclusively? Or do you provide them in conjunction with a comprehensive health services program? Which would be the most effective? What variations and combinations would be most successful? The research provided an opportunity to explore these options as well as learn about the requirements for alternative rural health services. It was really quite a pioneering effort though some have criticized the project as being unsuccessful and not worth the cost. Over time a number of very able world leaders in public health came out of that project. Many others from around the world came to visit the project and took away new insights. A great many articles were written by the research staff on their findings and experiences. The prevalence of specific diseases such as polio and Guinea Worm were identified. The complex question of how one manages and supervises health services, etc. was examined. I think the project has had a substantial influence in turning around the old Ghanaian medical community on public health services. The World Bank has recently featured the project in one of its reports on innovations in public health work in developing countries. It was a very innovative effort. (For more detail see the interview with Dr. J. S. Prince)

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In addition, we had a large population-contraceptive supply program at that time with the Government. But it was also clear to me that population projects and this research activity would not succeed without also engaging and having a more effective Ministry of Health, university participation in public health, and some expanded private endeavors. So we tried to develop over time a complex of projects. We had had a very successful project in nurses training that had been started back in the fifties. We had been involved in a small pox eradication program as part of the world-wide endeavor. There were bits and pieces of health activities that we tried to build into a more structured, systematic strategy for addressing primary health care tying in family planning. The situation was complicated because the Ghana National Family Planning Program (GNFPP) was placed in the Ministry of Economic Planning with the view that it should be integrated into all sections of Government development activity. While some useful work was done through this arrangement, it was not well managed. The problem was further complicated by the considerable personal and institutional animosity between the Ministry of Health and the GNFPP staff. Moreover, the Ministry of Health was poorly managed and was not in a position to provide effective direction to the family planning program at that time. Also the need for a population program and family planning services was not well recognized in Government and society, in general. I remember one well educated and articulate Ghanaian saying to me: "We don't need this program; we have plenty of land in Ghana."

Ghana had some able medical personnel and a few outstanding professional leaders but its lack of capacity to manage, plan and organize and carry out health programs was a constant problem. The Ministry of Health also was reluctant to cooperate with us. However, we kept working with Ministry officials trying to develop different ways to improve and carry out health activities and strengthen the Ministry's management, etc. But it was hard going. The major theme was an integrated health and family planning program. In sum, the population program had its ups and downs. When Colonel Acheampong came in, the Government wanted to throw out the population program because it was a vestige of the old administration, but, in the end, it was salvaged. The population program has had a

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rocky time and it has not been anywhere near as effective as we had hoped it would be in the early days, but it is still going and substantially improved, I think.

Also, the public health program is beginning to gain momentum. However, I was recently reading a World Bank report about Ghana's Ministry of Health and felt I was reading a report on the situation 20 years ago. It was, in many ways, the same report I would have written in the seventies about the inadequacies of the Ministry's leadership and organization. This was kind of sad but probably understandable given the major political and economic crises the country experienced in the years after I left. However, we had helped build a core of professional capability and introduced some basic concepts of public health service and family planning programs, particularly the decentralization of services to the districts that, I think, they are building on and extending throughout the country.

In addition to our work in health and population, we had several other innovative projects. At the time, the Government was talking about decentralization; really more talk than action. To assist with this aim, we developed a project called Economic and Rural Development Management (ERDM). It was basically a project to help set up a Ghanaian program for training district councils in planning for local development activities: to help these district councils bring together their district teachers, agriculture extension officers, and other community leaders with the district administrators and learn how develop district plans and programs for their areas. It was clear to me and others that one couldn't push the decentralization of development activity out to the local areas if there was no capacity in the local areas to receive them and make use of them. So it was a matter of trying to build from the bottom up as well as from the top down-building local capacities to plan for, use, and demand services from central agencies. That project was enthusiastically accepted by the Government with many Ghanaians trained at the local level. We had a follow-up project, in mind, in rural development support to provide resources to help the districts carry out their plans but it never got off the ground. After I left, the ERDM

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project carried on for a while but with the economy going downhill and the political situation deteriorating, it did not have much of a chance of being sustained.

A similar innovative approach was tried in agriculture applying a practical approach to development administration. It had been my view that the training of program managers tended to be too narrow; those who were sent abroad for training had difficulty making use of their new skills and knowledge when they returned, because their staffs and supervisors with whom they worked did not have the same understandings and resisted change. Significant changes in program management could only come from an integrated approach that addressed program management requirements at all levels of an operation from the top administrators down to the field supervisors. We had an excellent staff in the Mission in development administration and related training (quite uncommon for USAID Missions at the time) who went to work on the approach. The subsequent project provided training at the university level for a M.A. in agricultural administration and planning, a diploma course for middle level administrators at the Government Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), and a certificate program for field supervisors. The focus was on practical measures, solving problems while training and developing a common understanding of improved management practices.

Another initiative grew from our work with the National Academy of Sciences. The aim was to improve the country's scientific and technological capacities to support its development programs; specifically, to get the Ghana Council for Industrial and Scientific Research (CSIR) more closely linked with the economic problems of the country and to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to scientific and technological research. Ghana, during the Nkrumah period, had, in its efforts at modernization, created a large number of independent research institutes-institutes for fisheries, for crop research, for nutrition, soils research, for atomic energy, and so on. Each one was thought of as a symbol of modernization. But they were highly compartmentalized. There was almost no horizontal cooperation. I remember one colleague saying, "It is like a bunch of iron boxes that are open only at the top." There was no communication or collaboration among them even

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though their leaders knew each other well through the “old boys network.” Each institute had its own political ties to Government leaders and thus would not respond to attempts at collaboration on development problems. Many of the research activities were of limited merit or usefulness to the country.

Our effort was aimed at promoting a multi-disciplinary approach to some of the country's development problems and get the institutes and scientists to work together on priority development problems; to breakdown the barriers which were inhibiting useful research and effective development activity. So with the help and leadership of scientists from the National Academy of Sciences and the University of Arizona, we worked with the CSIR leadership to develop a national strategy and planning capability for scientific and technological research emphasizing multi-disciplinary approaches. One pilot effort was a study of an area in the northern region which was particularly poor and had famine and desertification problems. I thought this was a natural for a pilot approach leading to a multi-disciplinary program. As a result, we were able to get geographers, demographers, soils and water resource scientists, and economists and other social scientists to work on a study of the area preparatory to developing a long term rural development program. Again I believe the work never fully jelled because of the changing political and economic situation in the country. Also the CSIR leadership was weak and could not overcome the independent political linkages of the institutes with Government politicians.

There were a number of other innovative activities that we were trying. We attempted to work closely with the Peace Corp on various rural development initiatives. Also, we started a special project to engage American and local PVOs in development projects.

Q: That is private voluntary organizations.

NORTH: Or NGOs as they are now called ...non-government organizations.

We had a project administered by the USAID Mission which gave small grants to these organizations. At that time, we were not allowed to authorize any activity directly over

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\$5000 without Washington approval! Ironically, under the commodity import program, which was \$10 to 30 million, we were able to sign off on multi-million dollar procurement actions without Washington being involved. But when it came to \$10,000 for a little project, we had to get Washington's approval. It was one those tiresome bureaucratic situations. In part, as a consequence, we designed this project to give us more flexibility to respond to small project requirements as well as help promote private voluntary development activities.. There were a number of other ventures of that sort; perhaps, the most significant was Reverend Sullivan's Opportunities Industrialization Centers project for vocational training.

This was the time when Women in Development was becoming an important interest in foreign assistance as a result of the Percy amendment. The Ghana Mission sponsored one of the first studies and strategy statements on introducing women in development in our programs. Jeanne North, as a volunteer-spouses were not allowed to work for USAID Missions in those days-led a group to prepare this study and wrote the report. She had been involved with providing technical assistance to the Ghana Assembly of Women and other groups on a volunteer basis.

Also we still had the residual of the commodity import program. When the log jam on the debt rescheduling broke, we had on the shelf a \$19 million commodity import program, which had been already funded. There was only the question of releasing that money in response to economic reform actions of the Government. There was considerable concern over the selection of the imported commodities for advancing economic growth. For example, we got into the middle of a commercial conflict between U.S. businesses that sell textile equipment and those that sell textiles; we were providing foreign exchange financing for textile equipment for a local manufacturer but the U.S. textile lobby objected claiming that the textiles would compete with U.S. domestic production. I believe, something was worked out that resulted in the USAID financed looms being walled off from the other looms with the product from the USAID-financed looms not for export! Meanwhile, we had under PL 480 provided major quantities of cotton and thread for local

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textile production; a major factor in developing the textile industry in Ghana. Also we were not allowed to assist with local cotton production. It was more complicated than this but it is indicative of the conflicting policies one confronts in assistance programs.

In sum, there were a lot of interesting ideas and projects being initiated in that period, in addition to the MIDAS project, which I have already mentioned. But with the economy deteriorating and the political situation getting worse, the chances for their being successful grew dimmer and dimmer. There may be some remnants here and there, particularly from the training programs but a lot of it, I'm sure, was lost.

Q: Well, let me ask one final question on Ghana. Shirley Temple Black came out there. This is her first assignment abroad. Obviously everybody of our generation knows her as the number one child star during the thirties. What was your impression of her as an ambassador?

NORTH: Well, it was an interesting experience. I remember her arrival. She was, of course, a celebrity and attracted a lot of international press and TV coverage. Her arrival was quite an event; we were, as part of the senior staff, lined up at the airport to greet her as she came in. The TV cameras were recording every moment; then and for some time after. She was serious about her job, worked hard at it. She used her celebrity status to further the interests of the US . and our program. She was not, as one would expect, substantively very knowledgeable, but very determined to be in charge and resented very strongly anyone who thought that here was somebody who didn't know the business and tried to manager her. It was a very delicate relationship. At functions and receptions I learned, not that I had tried it myself but others had, not to talk to her about her films. She didn't respond to that, although she used that reputation to great effect. But she was the Ambassador and not the child star and therefore for somebody who met her to say "I remember your film"...she didn't take to that very well and cut them off. But she used her talents to establish that she was progressive and vigorous when addressing the Government and worked to build a good rapport and I think was quite popular.

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As with a lot of political figures, there were many stagings of special events. But for my purposes we got along quite well. She was very supportive. I would keep her informed on what we were trying to do and I would ask for her help to support some ideas in her conversations with the Government, with the ministers. When I had a log jam in the health program, she pitched in and talk to the Minister and Government about moving ahead. She didn't have to get into the technical details, it was just a matter of making a point about the basic concept of what we were trying to do. We had, for example, a well drilling rig that was brought in to do some demonstrations and training. We needed a public event to publicize this activity. She came out and wore a hard hat and talked to the drillers with all the press around. Similarly, she was on hand to welcome the arrival of our bulk fertilizer shipment and publicize the aim of having a private company. These were just a sample of many such activities. So she was very helpful in promoting what we were trying to do and being supportive.

In sum, she was conscientious in doing her paper work and leading the U.S. Mission and making representations to the Government. I think she was quite popular in the country and brought a certain amount of recognition to Ghana. I am afraid some programs like "60 Minutes" dwelt on the wrong things, distorted her role in Ghana and showed it in a less positive light than we had thought might be appropriate. But because of the incident that I mentioned about canceling Kissinger's visit, which was going to be a big event for her as Ambassador, she was recalled from Ghana. She flew to Liberia where he went next to speak to him and then went back to the States. For a long time she was not allowed to return but she was determined to have one more visit to Ghana and say good by to many friends. She did get that opportunity, but for a long time we were without an ambassador-another demonstration of our displeasure; she was unfortunately part of that.

I don't know how she views her experience. I heard something subsequently when she went to Czechoslovakia as Ambassador that she was very unhappy with USAID and didn't want them involved. Her only other experience was in Ghana, as far as I know, and I don't

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recall anything there that would have suggested she had a problem. But at any rate, from my perspective it was an interesting and positive experience, i.e., apart from the events that led to the suspension of the program which had nothing to do with her role in Ghana.

Appointment as Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, USAID-1976

Q: You left Ghana in 1976 and you came back where you were to serve for the next six years and then served in USAID head office until 1989.

NORTH: In Washington, I was the Deputy Assistant Administrator and, for several periods, Acting Assistant Administrator for the African Bureau from June 1976 until June 1982. For the first seven months, I worked with Stan Scott, who replaced Sam Adams as Assistant Administrator. Then from May 1977 to December, 1980, I had a fascinating time working with Golar T. Butcher. She had worked with HFAC Africa Subcommittee and earlier as a legal advisor in the State Department. She was fiercely committed to African development and to the advancement of human rights, generally. She brought great zeal and spirit to the Bureau and was an incredibly hard worker. While our initial days were somewhat shaky, we became over time good friends and colleagues, a relationship that continued long after until her untimely death in June, 1993. Then in the Spring of 1981 with a new Republican Administration, Frank Ruddy was appointed Assistant Administrator, who previously had served as legal counsel for Exxon. It was a sharp shift to a more conservative agenda in economic policy, population programming, and hostility to African socialistic tendencies.

Q: What did the job entail, the job from 1976-82?

NORTH: I was responsible for the policy and operations management of the Bureau's programs in Africa. It included the definition of a broad strategy for US assistance to Africa; the annual budgeting process including the allocation of funds among the countries and programs; setting up systems for designing and approving programs; presenting and defending the program within the Executive Branch and with Congress. I spent a great

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deal of time on personnel matters such as the selection and appointment of staff for senior positions, both in the Bureau and overseas, as mission directors and office directors and mobilizing efforts to get technical staffs for field operations. That was a very time consuming function. In general, my efforts were aimed at getting the Bureau to function more effectively, respond to the changing circumstances in Africa and to changes in Agency policies as we moved from one administration to another.

When I arrived in 1976, the Bureau had just been reorganized, under instructions from the Deputy Administrator. Prior to that time the technical staff had been assigned to the country desks as part of the geographical divisions. Most of the project design, review and approval function was assigned to the country divisions. The reorganization was designed to strengthen the project management processes. The Bureau had a reputation for being very slow in committing its annual budgets, getting projects identified, designed and approved on time. It had a poor reputation within USAID. Every year there was enormous pressure from State and from the Administrator to accelerate this process. There were a number of reasons for this. It was partly due to Africa and the fluid and rapidly developing situation there, partly to under-staffing, and partly to Africa's relatively low priority in U.S. interests. The decision, before I got there, had been made to copy the Latin American model and create a very strong and well-staffed unit for the oversight of project design and approval processes, taking them away from the Desks. This, in effect, reduced the role of the Desks markedly.

But this change had not been completed when I arrived. It was in mid-stream. The Assistant Administrator, Stan Scott, at that time had been there about a year. He was a thoughtful and attractive person, but I had the impression that he was somewhat overwhelmed, or burned out, trying to get on top of the Africa program and understand USAID operations. Our time together lasted less than a year because with election in 1976, there was a change in administration.

Q: The movement from the Ford administration to the Carter administration.

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NORTH: Yes, this was the year before the Carter administration.

Q: Yes, Ford had taken over, Nixon had resigned.

NORTH: Yes, it was within that period. The reorganization was a major problem; many of the senior staff had left so I found myself with a rather difficult situation. For example, I could find nobody who could give me a list of all the projects. So my first question was what are we doing? I remember people coming to me complaining about not being able to find any project files because they had moved the filing cabinets from one office to another. There was lots of confusion. Unfortunately there were a number of basic issues: programming and budgeting systems within the Bureau that needed to be developed, staff recruited in an environment in which people preferred to be assigned to Asia and Latin America. You had to be committed to Africa to accept an assignment in the Bureau. Most of the large USAID missions were in other parts of the world except for a few major programs such as in Ghana before I left and as Nigeria had been, and Kenya was becoming. But an African assignment was not first on a lot of people's list at that time; also the State Department placed severe restrictions on overseas staffing. So staffing the field missions was a horrendous problem, particularly in the early days. I recall a number of instances where the Ambassadors in the field argued vehemently (on very threatening instructions from the State Africa Bureau) against having any, or in time 4-5 in some cases, AID staff in their country. It was a problem of the chicken and egg; we needed staff to develop and manage the programs; they believed we should have the program first and then possibly some staff to manage it. As a consequence, it made the initiation of programs and their effective management difficult.

But gradually the interest in Africa began to grow and Congress with the New Directions legislation placed a higher priority on assistance to the poorer countries-the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). (The pendulum was swinging toward expansion and away from the limitations of the Korry Report.) Under the Carter Administration, we were under great pressure to have programs in almost every African country, which was a

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tall order since there were over 40 countries. I remember going to the Hill to testify and being asked, "Why don't you have a program in this country or that poor country?" In the context of helping the poor as a dominant motive for U.S. assistance, assistance to the poorest countries become more prominent. This was the time when there was a call for the end of the "trickle down" concept of development. The dominant philosophy was direct assistance to the poor. For Africa this was reinforced by the United Nations list of least developed countries of which 19 of the 26 were in Africa at that time. It was also the time when the human rights issue emerged as a U.S. policy interest. Wherever the State Department declared that there were human rights abuses, our projects had to be reviewed by State to determine that they were directly beneficial to the poor. This philosophy and interest became the more dominant rationale in the USAID allocation processes which had not been the case, for the most part, when the Communist threat issue or the economic growth issue were the dominant concerns, although they were still important in some cases. This approach to assistance emerged fairly rapid and, beginning with the Carter administration, it became a dominant theme although U.S. security interests also continued to play a role. After my first year in the Bureau, there was a major push for new initiatives in Africa. One of the initiatives was to have programs in every African country.

One illustrative sidelight of this was the program in Equatorial Guinea. It is an interesting illustration of the ambivalence about our responding to poor countries and the effects of political interests. Equatorial Guinea had a horrible history of brutal leadership which had decimated the educated population. A tiny little place with less than 300,000 people. At some point during this time, both State and Congressional interests became involved. State wanted a program in Equatorial Guinea, because it had interests in base rights in Spain and Spain wanted the U.S. to provide some help to Equatorial Guinea. Equatorial Guinea had been a Spanish colony. At the same time, prominent Congressional leaders were questioning why we were not assisting Equatorial Guinea as one of the poorest countries in Africa. You will recall that Equatorial Guinea (rather Fernando Po) had had a

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significant role during the Biafran crisis before independence, as it had served as the base for the Joint Church Aid relief flights.

Well, none of us were very enthusiastic about starting a program there, but we were obliged to think about how we could deal with the growing pressures and have a program in Equatorial Guinea with a minimum of management burden. (I believe, the new Ambassador from Equatorial Guinea was the first foreign ambassador to call on newly appointed Secretary Rogers.) To start a new country program you had to have high level approval. The decision to open a program in Equatorial Guinea went winging its way through the top levels of USAID and the State Department. Everybody was backing off and trying not to have to make a decision. The issue kept going up to higher levels until it reached the White House for President Carter's approval. When it got to the President's office, I am told, somebody said, "This is ridiculous; President Carter should not have to worry about starting a small program in a place called Equatorial Guinea in which we have no interest other than maybe trying to satisfy Spain." It was a small but indicative experience. It wasn't a very good place to have a program in any event. It was symbolic of the bizarre combination of our interest in poor countries and traditional international political/security concerns.

In addition to having programs in all of the African countries, other major initiatives included the development of an international program for the Sahel region following on the massive drought of the mid-70s in that region; major support for the southern African countries and the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in its opposition to South Africa and apartheid; expanded programs in East Africa both as part of our interests in containing Soviet influence and in maintaining military bases; and trying to help Sudan out its disastrous economic crisis.

Q: You say poor countries. I get a feeling that this talks more about a handout rather than to try to get something going. You know the old saying that if you give a person fish it is good for one day but if you teach him how to fish it will survive for life.

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NORTH: No, it wasn't a handout in that sense. The philosophy behind the program was to provide assistance that would help these countries become productive and have the capability to carry out their own development activities. So there was a very heavy emphasis on building up local capacities to carry out development efforts. It could be simple little projects like egg and poultry production which would benefit the local population; we would help them to plan, design and manage these activities. Most of the programs came within the New Directions /Basic Human Needs approach, demonstrating direct impact. However, I believe this approach, while desirable, undermined the longer term institutional capacity building thrusts which had characterized some of the earlier programs.

I remember, when I was assigned to Ghana and designing the MIDAS project, I was in Washington on TDY. I was called to the Hill by one of the staffers to defend the Ghana program: was it going to be directly and immediately beneficial to the poor? When he had read the description in the Congressional Presentation, he wasn't too sure. So I spent a lunchtime showing how this program would benefit the poor. Also I recall that one year after the New Directions legislation had been passed, Congress had asked for a report showing evidence that we had had a direct impact since the legislation was passed. Also in a hearing, I was asked to defend the training of Africans in the U.S., particularly those in graduate studies: what did their training have to do with addressing the needs of the poor? It took some time to educate Congress that you don't do development overnight and that local capacities are critical to effective programs. You don't have direct and immediate impact unless it is some kind of emergency assistance.

One of the major programs during this period, particularly during the Carter administration, was the Sahel Development Program.

Q: This is the creeping, almost desert area below the Sahara which is moving down.

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NORTH: It is the Francophone area extending from Chad to Mauritania and including Senegal, Mali, Niger, CAR, and Burkina Faso. The Sahel is principally in that zone, which is partially desert, partially savannah and with gradations in between; it was in this area that the desertification process was spreading. Experts were trying to determine whether this was a permanent continuing process or whether it was temporary and how to deal with it. (Cape Verde was added to the program subsequently.)

The Sahel Development Program was a major initiative growing out of the massive famine relief operation that had been carried out in that area. (Don Brown, Deputy Assistant Administrator and David Shear, who headed the Sahel geographic office, were the principal architects of this program.) There were European donors and others who had been prime movers in trying to make the shift from famine relief to rehabilitation and development. This led to the formation of the Club du Sahel, which was a community of donors linked to a regional organization, a group of Sahelian countries concerned with regional development. It was a large, complex program primarily focused on the agricultural dimensions of the region's development with a 10 to 20 year perspective for developing that particularly poor region. There is an important story about the Sahel Development Program: the concept, the regional focus, the multi-donor collaboration, the sector strategies, and the projects. The Club du Sahel and its weak African counterpart the CILSS (Comite Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte Contre la Secheresse dans le Sahel) still exist but other factors-national political and economic crises, loss of the motivation for cooperation, lack of sound economic linkages with coastal West African states which are essential for the Sahel's development, failure of Sahel country leadership and bureaucracies to face up to policy issues, etc.- have all weaken prospects for regional development in the Sahel. (I understand that new initiatives for linking West African economies are now underway.)

The other major preoccupation during my time was southern Africa: the movement in Zimbabwe from UDI to black sovereign government and the formation of the Southern

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African Development Coordination Conference as a counter to South Africa's apartheid and destabilization efforts in the region.

Q: UDI is Unilateral Declaration of Independence which was basically a white government which was holding firm against including the black population. It lasted, what?

NORTH: Yes, a form of civil war. There was a complex set of issues, influenced by strongly held conservative and liberal views within and outside the country, of how to facilitate the transition to black majority rule and the creation of Zimbabwe as a new nation. Mozambique had become independent to which we responded with a \$10 million grant. This was not effective as a political gesture and for various reasons Mozambique developed it ties with the Communists; we backed off.

Also we had long been involved with programs in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland. In fact, in earlier times we had had a regional office called OSARC (Office of Southern African Regional Cooperation, first based in Harare, then Lusaka, and later in Mbabane) that managed the programs in five countries: Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe, prior to its independence. But with UDI we backed off and the headquarters was moved to Swaziland. Subsequently, we broke up the regional program and established separate programs in each country reflecting the growing interest in the region. There was a whole complex of activity evolving in southern Africa at that time.

It was during that period that the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference was formed to facilitate the development of economic independence from South Africa and promote regional cooperation as a counterweight to South African dominance of the region. The southern regional program became a major enterprise at that time. I was involved in several aspects of these developments. The main activity was the preparation for Congress of the report on "Development Needs and Opportunities for Cooperation in Southern Africa" completed in March 1979. (Roy Stacey, who was in charge of the

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Southern Africa Office, led the study.) This report included 10 country studies and 7 regional program analyses.

There was also the rush to provide an independence day grant (for health services) to Zimbabwe to show U.S. support for the formation of the new African government of President Mugabe. Subsequently, the Administrator and I attended the ZIMCORD (Zimbabwe's Conference on Rural Development) which was the first major meeting with donors to raise funds for national development. The U.S. pledged \$275 million for a multi-year program. The ease with which we were able to get Congressional, OMB and White House agreement for this multi-year commitment-multi-year commitments were generally frowned on and at times considered to be a fiscally inappropriate procedure-reflects the broad base of support for the new government in Zimbabwe and for the change to majority rule. I recall testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the ZIMCORD and this commitment; it was one of the most positive and supporting sessions I had been involved in.

Subsequently, I attended one of the first meetings of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference which we had promoted behind the scenes for some time. This was an interesting meeting because it was primarily one at which the nine southern African countries came together to agree on the arrangements and procedures for the SADCC with the donors waiting in the wings to be called to give their endorsement and pledge of support for the SADCC's program.

I also recall that in anticipation of the developments in southern African that we had presented in the Congressional Presentation the broad outlines for a \$100 million regional program. As is so often the case, the Congressional budget process starts long before the year for which the money is to be committed. As a consequence, we had few details to explain how the funds would be used. Unfortunately for me and the Africa Bureau, the Deputy Administrator at that time advised (he had not asked us) the Secretary of State as they were traveling to the Hill to testify before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that

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this was just a slush fund or some such phrase which the Secretary then conveyed to the Committee. It took some maneuvering in my hearings to get this budget request back on track without appearing to contradict the Secretary's testimony. Subsequently, the funds became the major resource for supporting the SADCC and the Southern Africa Regional Program which Congress prescribed each year thereafter.

We also had a drought in East Africa during my time as Deputy Assistant Administrator which was another major crisis to address. I had to testify as to what we were doing to meet the needs of those starving in East Africa with the familiar problem of being asked how many were in need and how many would die. Congressman Solarz chaired the session and pressed hard for these numbers with harsh criticisms about our lack of detail in our responses and our efforts to put the food shortage in the larger context of agricultural development requirements. We, however, were able to provide substantial relief assistance to the area.

There were major issues in Zaire with the Mobutu government with unending efforts to bring about economic reforms. Congress criticized the Administration for providing balance of payments and other assistance that, it believed, was not getting to the people, and that we were really supporting a corrupt Mobutu who was playing games with the West by agreeing to reforms but really wasn't serious. As a consequence, we had major struggles with Congress over the issue of the types of programs to be carried out. There was understandable concern that our assistance such as PL 480 rice was being diverted so that we almost were required to visually track the rice from the port to the consumer's mouth. Eventually, we shifted from balance of payments support to support for private voluntary organizations and local activities, by-passing the government. Today I doubt that even these programs are feasible.

In addition, at that time, there were hopes that Sudan's economic crisis could be turned around and the Government would adopt a major reform program. There was a major initiative among the donors, the IMF, and the World Bank to generate an additional \$300

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million to finance the reform program. I recall meetings with the IMF staff and at a donors meeting in Paris trying to make the calculations of balance of payments deficits and donor funding come together so that the reform program could go forward.

It was also the period when Ethiopia was slipping more and more under communist dominated governments but mostly local tyranny. The Africa Bureau was struggling to preserve...we had been in Ethiopia for 25 years... the assistance program and our positive relationships with the Ethiopian people and many officials. Our Mission Directors in Addis Ababa and others wrote eloquent messages trying to continue the program on humanitarian grounds but we weren't getting much cooperation from the Mengistu government. There was a sideshow concern about the nationalization of American investments which, of course, posed legislative barriers to continuing assistance. Despite our efforts, the situation went from bad to worse. Eventually, we reached the point where having made all the pleas that we could to preserve the program, there was no basis for continuing. So as Acting Assistant Administrator, I gave the instruction to close the mission after 25 years of development activity.

Cooperation for Development in Africa One last area of activity that may be of general interest was the evolution of the Cooperation for Development in African initiative concerned with strengthening the coordination of external assistance from the major donors. I, along with some of the Bureau staff and my State Department colleagues Vernon Johnson (State Africa Bureau's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs and Carl Cundiff, director of Economic Affairs Division under Johnson), had a substantial involvement in this initiative. The initiative began when Kissinger was Secretary of State. President Giscard d'Estaing of France (1974-1981) and his Government were alarmed at the deteriorating economic and political conditions in Africa. They believed that it was important for the West to make a dramatic statement of support for the moderate leaders of Africa accompanied with a major assistance initiative. Thus, he proposed that the major Western donors contribute to a special billion dollar fund called PEPA, Programme Economique pour Afrique. The main donors involved would be Belgium, Canada, France,

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Germany, United Kingdom, and the United States. (Italy was included later.) These countries were providing the major part of the assistance to Africa and almost all the bilateral assistance. The State Department, in the midst of other major negotiations with the French Government, wanted to support this initiative as a form of quid pro quo but no one wanted another fund (the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had just been established with a billion dollar fund). The State and USAID Africa Bureaus had the task of determining how the objective could be achieved without a new fund or additional money. Our proposal developed into the concept of donor coordination on a few major development priorities on which the donors would orient and attribute some of their existing and future program funds. My interest was in seeing whether there could be a way to achieve more effective harmonization of donor assistance to Africa focused on some key development problems. The coordination of assistance programs is a perpetual theme and goal in the development assistance business but one which donors rarely share with enthusiasm.

After many donor conferences and negotiations, we able to put to together and gain African acceptance of the Cooperative Action for Development in Africa (CADA) initiative. (This name later was changed to Cooperation for Development in Africa (CDA) at the request of the French Government after the election of the Mitterrand Government to avoid associating the initiative with the previous government!) The main concept for CDA was for the each of the donors to select a major development issue/theme that it would take lead on as the main coordinator. In this role each donor would then bring together other donors and African expertise to map out “sector strategies” and assistance requirements harmonizing technologies, funding, and other programming arrangements. The themes selected were Agricultural Research (U.S.), Primary Health Care (U.S.). Forestry (France), East and Southern Africa Transport (Germany), Central Africa roads (Belgium), Telecommunications (Canada) and later rural development (Italy). (Getting agreement on this list of themes was a major and time consuming task as the donors did not have all of them as priorities for their programs.) In addition, the heads

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of the development agencies of the donors would meet to exchange views on African development problems and strategies and hold meetings with African development experts to gain their views. There was no secretariat, only a small coordinating group based in Paris to plan the meetings. It was an ambitious and fragile concept given the underlying resistance to coordination activities.

The overriding interest among the donors in participating, probably, had more to do with domestic and foreign politics than with concerns for improving the quality and impact of development assistance, which was my interest. The French mainly wanted to make a political statement supporting the moderate African leaders, particularly among the francophone countries. The Germans, never seriously interested in donor coordination, from my experience, gave it only lip service, didn't want the French to get the dominant role and recognition and thus joined with flourish and minimal substance and ended up irritating the Southern Africans. (I recall, the Germans had opposed and did not join the Club du Sahel.) The British were not very enthusiastic and took no lead responsibilities; and with the election of the Thatcher Government announced at one of the last CDA meetings with some drama that they were pulling out. The U.K. Government had in earlier years over-committed itself to multilateralism and Thatcher's Government wanted to stress British commercial interests with its aid, which is not compatible with coordination. The Belgians went along but seemed to have difficulties getting their act together. The Canadians had their special interests in telecommunications but were generally positive supporters of the coordination concepts. The U.S. shared the French concern about Africa's political trends and the need for some sort of special efforts; we were also strong on coordination at that time and took the lead in shaping the strategy for the CDA.

However, over time the high levels of the State Department grew less interested and more skeptical; a change in administrations had some effect, although we were able to get President Carter's support by emphasizing the primary health care initiative; and then with the change to the Reagan Administration the idea collapsed as USAID lost interest in coordination leadership activities and preferred to have the World Bank take the lead.

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However, for a while high level donor meetings were sponsored by the Belgians, French, Germans, Canadians, and the U.S. At the U.S. session, Vice-President Bush and ECA Secretary General Adedeji opened the meeting; a special session was arranged for the World Bank and IMF representatives to present their views on African development. We had also organized a meeting in Abidjan with 60 or so African experts with the donors present to talk about development priorities; the French and Italians organized similar meetings later on.

I personally continue to think the idea had much merit as did some of my colleagues with whom I worked on it. Others criticized it for taking too much of their time, did not share the concept of USAID leadership of coordination initiatives and the importance of harmonizing of external assistance. Some felt that the Africans were not adequately involved but this was coming, although it was difficult getting the European donors interested in African participation. The absence of a secretariat and the halfhearted interest of the other donors, of course, also undermined the process. However, there were a number of productive technical levels meetings (the key feature of the CDA concept) on some of the themes such as the ones we held with African expertise on agricultural research and primary health care. These provided the basis for later developments such as the zonal approach to African agricultural research, the organization of a continent-wide and multi-donor (somewhat) Combating Childhood Communicable Disease program, and later developments in Southern Africa on regional transport development. While the World Bank continues to provide important coordination through its Consultative Group meetings for individual countries, the Special Program for Africa on macro-economic policy questions, and agricultural research planning, the coordination and harmonization of technical/sectoral program approaches has never made much headway within individual countries or in an African-wide context generally. (The situation has subsequently changed at the macroeconomic level with the creation of the World Bank led Special Program for Africa.)

One side note about the Combating Communicable Childhood Disease program (CCCD). More or less, coincidental with the work on CDA, Senator Weicker, under prodding from

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the CDC/Atlanta, called me to his office. He demanded that we do something, directly and immediately, about the resurgence of Yaws in Ghana; CDC had been involved in an earlier effort, I believe, to eradicate Yaws. I said we could not just go in and tell the Government we are coming the eradicate Yaws. However, at that time we were attempting to determine how to move ahead with the CDA public health initiative. So we building on Weicker's interest, we suggested that we develop the CCCD project Africa-wide with multi-donor participation. Out of that was developed by the AFR Regional Programs office the \$50 million CCCD program, primarily immunizations, with CDC as the primary agent-some time before the Child Survival program into which the CCCD was included. (The story of the CCCD program has been written up well with lessons learned by CDC.)

In sum, during this period from 1976 until the time I left in 1982 when I was in the Africa Bureau, there were a complex of major regional program thrusts in the Sahel and southern Africa, major program initiatives and political/economic policy issues in Zaire, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Liberia and attempts at improved donor coordination. Underlying these interests was the theme of the day about being sure that we were responding to the least developed countries of Africa and poorest populations.

Q: How political was the Carter administration and then the Reagan administration on Africa?

NORTH: During my time as Deputy Assistant Administrator, there were the administrations of Ford, Carter and Reagan.

During the Carter period, the basic thrust was very much concerned with the issues of poverty, human rights and meeting basic human needs. I think the Soviet threat, except for the Somalia, Ethiopia, and somewhat in Sudan and southern Africa, was less of a dominating influence. It was primarily one of moving to programs that would have more direct benefit on the rural poor.

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I remember we developed during that time program guidance for the preparation of Country Assistance Strategy Statements. I think we probably went overboard, but it was guidance that was used by USAID to reflect the New Directions legislation. Our guidance called for analyses of “Who and where were the poor? Why are they poor?” and building up from there. The unintended effect of that analysis was, however, to push for attention to “Who were the poorest?” A lot of people kept using the phrase that we were concerned with the “poorest of the poor.” That phrase was never in the legislation, I believe, but it became a commonly accepted expression of policy when, in fact, we were not required or directed to find the poorest of the poor in every country and be concerned only with them. But it tended to move the program that way. I think it caused us to go too far in approaches for addressing questions of poverty; different strategies are required for addressing the needs of the poorest in developing countries and for addressing the needs of the poor generally, sometimes referred to as the working poor such as small farmers. But certainly “the poorest of the poor” was a dominant theme.

I remember when I was writing Congressional narratives for the Sahelian countries. In the early days the narratives always started off: What are the U.S. interests? The narratives began by stating that the interests are the political and security issues associated with the threat of communism. However, at the time of the Sahelian Development Program, the U.S. interest in the Sahel was expressed solely in terms of humanitarian and developmental goals. This shift was in some ways rather radical. For example, I remember writing in the Congressional narrative the justification of why we were starting a program in Chad. This was in the earlier period when I was Director for Central and West Africa. My State Department colleagues had written that “Chad was strategically located in the heart of Africa.” In terms of U.S. political and security interests, this was way off base. However, during the Carter Administration, the rationale for the programs in Chad and the Sahel were much more humanitarian and development-oriented in keeping with the New Directions legislation.

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There were, of course, special cases: the Zaire program was always justified on political/security grounds, having to support Mobutu to hold the country together because of the dangers of communist influence. Marxist ideology was taking hold in Angola and Mozambique, which influenced our aid relationships or lack of them. I remember our making several false starts in gearing up to respond to Namibia's independence.

U.S. assistance to Malawi is an interesting example of the swings of U.S. political and assistance policies. In the 60s the program in Malawi was modest but contained important projects such as the creation of Bunda Agricultural College. Then, the aid was cut off during the Carter years, in part because of the Government's imprisonment of Americans with Jehovah Witness. Also the Administration was very strongly anti-South Africa and apartheid while Malawi was willing to cooperate with the South African Government, contrary to the views of the frontline states such as Zambia, Tanzania and Botswana. The Malawi program deteriorated rapidly and the Tanzanian, Zambian and Botswanan programs grew. Subsequently Malawi came back into favor under the Reagan Administration as an economic bright spot in Africa because the country was following market-oriented policies. Consequently, Malawi was favored with a rapid increase in U.S. assistance. Then under Bush our program was reduced because of the political situation, a lack of democracy and a poor human rights record. Now this situation is changing again with the newly elected government. So Malawi is an interesting weather vane indicating the prevailing winds of the latest foreign policies and assistance themes. Yet in the global context of U.S. political/security interests, Malawi has, all along, been of minimal interest to the U.S., perhaps that is why we have been able to raise and lower our programs so sharply with each change in Administration.

In general, however, there was always the undercurrent of the political rationale for our assistance and thus the State Department's interest in preserving certain levels of support for various governments. These interests kept popping up. The rationale for assistance to southern Africa was tied to supporting the region's opposition to apartheid with, of

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course, a backdrop of fears of spreading communism. Our support for Kenya went way up because it provided support facilities for our Navy as part of our counter to Soviet influence in Ethiopia and Red Sea area and declined when human rights abuses mounted. In the West African countries, Ghana was having its flip flops with economic crises and coups and our programs rising and falling accordingly. Nigeria was reputedly self-sufficient so we cut out the program as it was no longer “a poor country”, although we subsequently built up a large program in health and population activities. Cameroon, which had always been a sleeper in U.S. assistance policy suddenly became a promising situation; now it is less so and the Mission is being closed. So we had a lot of off again/on-again situations in individual countries. The State Department was obsessed with changing, or not changing, annual aid levels for a country as a reflection of its position of the day. (I recall that when I tried to shift a million dollars from the large Kenyan program to support an environment project in Burundi, the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa personally directed me to back off.) But the dominant theme during the Carter years was the importance of addressing poverty and promoting development.

In sum, apart from the broad themes of the Sahel Development and southern African regional cooperation, and the political interests in East Africa, the guiding theme was the desire to respond to the needs of the poor countries and therefore expand our programs to all countries throughout the continent. As a consequence, we had programs in Madagascar, the Comoros, the Seychelles, Sao Tome/Principe and on and on. The management of all this was a real challenge. Ever since, the State Department and USAID have been at loggerheads over whether and how to get out of small countries.

Q: Today is April 5, 1993 and this is tape number four of a continuing interview with Haven North. Haven we were going to go to the 1982-89 period.

Interim Assignments: Rural Development in Nepal, the African Development Foundation-1982

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NORTH: I left the position of Deputy Assistant Administrator in the African Bureau in June 1982. There was a bit of a transition period while I sorted out other possible assignments. During that time I had various assignments, one of which was a very interesting opportunity to evaluate an integrated rural development project in Nepal. Integrated rural development programs were in some disrepute in USAID under the Reagan Administration and in the development community generally. The feeling was that they were too complex and were not effective. In this case, there was an issue between the Mission Director and the Administrator over whether to continue the Rapti rural development scheme in western Nepal. I was asked to organize a group and go out to evaluate the project.

For about six weeks, I was the co-leader of a team of five; the other co-leader was a Nepalese who had retired from government, Dr. Dervander Raj Panday. He had formerly been in the Ministry of Finance as a senior civil servant, had resigned and had his own consulting firm. (Later he became Minister of Finance for a period.) We spent two weeks of that time walking some 40 miles through the hills of Nepal. There were no roads into the village areas where project activities were taking place. Although strenuous, we had a wonderful experience meeting villagers along the way, meeting with village leadership, and government officials who were located there and examining the activities of the project in agriculture and irrigation, roads, health, education, forestry, water supply, cottage industry, erosion control, and alternative energy generation.

I won't attempt to go into the findings of the evaluation; there is a report in the CDIE files, I believe. Our report was not enthusiastically received by the government. One of the main themes was that there were limits to how much the project could to achieve on the ground without strong support from the Nepalese Government for decentralized management of rural development schemes. While they were supporting many schemes of this type throughout the country, the Government was very centralized and this kind of program needed lots of local authority to be effective. So there were problems of delegating

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authority to local administrations, getting Government technicians to work in the rural areas generally, and mobilizing local community participation.

The project was extremely complex because of its multi-sectoral composition; also the administrative chore of managing it from Kathmandu was substantial. There was the issue of creating a project management operation in the Rapti zone which became very large and in some ways had the potential of becoming a new layer of government in the area rather than be a facilitator of the local government already in place. So there were a great many issues. The project, however, was continued and subsequently redesigned. I have lost track of what has happened since.

But the project was a good example of a basic issue in USAID and the World Bank and other donors about approaches to rural development with a general trend at that time to withdraw from funding such projects. The unfortunate part about it was that there was not enough effort to learn from that experience and to reshape the strategy for rural development. Subsequently the World Bank did a major study on rural development programs. But approaches to meeting the needs of the rural poor-still the great mass of poverty in the world- were abandoned in favor of general economic growth and special initiatives such as for child survival.

During my assignment as DAC's Chairman of the Experts Group on Evaluation we were able to organize an international conference on rural development (organized by the Evaluation Department of the World Bank) to attempt to get some sense of what the donor community's experience had been. The rural development question was at the heart of a basic issue of development strategy at that time; it continues to be one today.

I also was given an assignment during this interim period to help get the African Development Foundation organized. The legislation had been in place for some time. Funds were being reserved in the USAID accounts for the Foundation, but it had taken a while to get it organized. I was asked to help move it along. During this period we were

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able to get a board elected and some of the basic ground rules of the Foundation set up. I arranged to have a colleague, who had experience as a controller, help get an accounting system going and get the rudiments of the Foundation in place subject to being taking over by a board and a duly appointed director. My part in it was terminated rather quickly because it was quite clear that someone who was identified with USAID, wasn't a registered Republican, nor a minority wasn't likely to be considered for assignment with the organization. Also my ideas for ADF strategy such as building African development networks of grassroots organizations were not welcomed by Congressional staff supporters of the ADF who preferred a more ad hoc, sprinkling (my characterization) of project grants. There were some rocky issues in getting it started but it now seems to be on a sound footing.

Q: What was your impression at this time as the Reagan administration was beginning to take hold? Was there a difference in political philosophy or was it just one party replacing another, as you saw it impact on USAID?

NORTH: The Reagan Administration came with a highly ideological orientation. The policy under the Reagan Administration placed major emphasis on market forces and market economies along with very negative views on government roles and participation in development. It was also extreme in its anti-communism views, which caused it to underestimate local and historical factors in the some of the developing countries. There was considerable criticism of previous strategies related to rural development and the New Directions legislation which concentrated on direct assistance to the poor. The Reagan philosophy was very much one of pushing the private sector over other activities and this permeated the USAID strategy. It was also one that was very strong on promoting American investment and business in developing countries. While there was a lot of merit in some of the approaches in this policy, it tended to be taken to extremes raising questions about whether it would really be effective over time. There was always the problem of trying to develop a balance between the extremes of market forces, market economy strategies for development and those strategies that relied heavily on

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government involvement. Neither extreme works very well. So the struggle was to find some balance; possibly the balance can be found now, but it was not possible at that time.

Q: Did you see any areas where from your point of view the Reagan approach seemed to be more effective than some others, say the Carter or previous ones, and where it was particularly detrimental?

NORTH: I think some of the potentially effective areas were the concern for strengthening the private sector, private participation, private business. I think that had merit. I don't think there was enough time to really see that blossom. There was a lot of pressure on developing country governments to undertake reforms, to divest themselves of public enterprises, which is an extremely difficult process. (You may recall in our earlier discussion, when we were talking about Ghana, that I mentioned that we had tried to promote privatization at that time.) There was a great deal of pressure, and the administration of USAID went so far as to set targets for each country requiring so many privatization acts which was quite unrealistic given the extreme difficulty developing countries find in the privatization process. There are so many vested interests that such a fundamental change in the way the country operates is difficult to bring about. Many of these companies, which, of course, were government owned companies, were not viable and the question was what to do with them. At any rate, I expect that the pressure from that policy has been healthy in moving countries that direction, but perhaps not nearly as successful as those pushing it had hoped.

Also there was move to have USAID provide direct capital aid to U.S. private businesses to invest in developing countries. This had been tried before unsuccessfully. (One of the concerns we had when I was in Ghana was the Iowa scale corn growing Ejura farm sponsored by a private U.S. business group. We tried to help it become profitable, but it went bankrupt several times before collapsing.) While politically correct domestically, it was poor development assistance policy-USAID is not an investment bank, although it can help developing countries improve their investment climates. There was also a healthy

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interest in developing microenterprises and small business groups. There are studies that show some of the effects of that work.

But the tendency of this policy was to swing too far in emphasizing the private sector and neglecting the needs of people in impoverished conditions and the strengthening of essential institutions. All of the rural development strategy was pretty well thrown out. The saving feature in terms of helping people in dire conditions was the special emphasis that the Administrator McPherson gave to child survival and oral rehydration programs which served to soften the more harsh aspects of the market economy strategy, although the question of their sustainability continues. These provided a bit more humanitarian orientation, if rather narrow, and over time will make a useful contribution to the welfare of people in the developing countries. But constructive views of appropriate government roles were not evident or considered.

Another area of great controversy was the Reagan Administration's view of population and family planning reflected in the US position at the conference in Mexico on population.

Q: This was early in the 1980s wasn't it?

NORTH: Yes. ...in terms of family planning services. As a consequence, the population program had a considerable setback in some of its activities, although the program was preserved. Some of the more extreme views of the Republican Administration, I think, put a damper on more effective operations in an area which is extremely important to the future of the world and development generally.

Q: So somebody could understand the issues, what had USAID been doing in helping population control? What were the inhibitors that the Republicans were putting on and what were the motivations behind these inhibitions?

NORTH: The basic issue centered on the types of family planning services being provided. Behind that, I think, were those who had strong feelings that population was not an

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issue, that aggressive efforts to promote family planning services are inappropriate and unnecessary. But, on balance, the issue was mainly raised by those who were concerned about the use of contraceptives along with the opposition to abortion being used as a way to control population. Whereas the use of abortion for this purpose had never been Agency policy, and according to the law it was prohibited, there was always the fear that it was advocated as an option for those who received family planning services. There was also a fear that family planning was becoming coercive. There may have been some examples of this, but in most situations, this was not the case. But the concerns led to cutting off funding for the UNFPA and other international programs because of their association with presenting abortion as an option, and in the case of China, accusations that it was coercive. None of those were policies of USAID in the previous administration, but the issue interfered with the concept of how to carry out family planning programs. Family planning programs continued but the approach became much more complex and it became difficult to design programs that were accepted and effective. So it was a basic issue that we are experiencing in the United States between those who hold the conservative views on the need for and approaches to family planning and those who are more balanced. I recall being criticized when the DAA for Africa Bureau for not being more aggressive in pushing family planning in Africa because of my concern for African sensitivities. But also being criticize for pressing to hard.

Some in the Administration wished to limit family planning guidance to natural methods, which others considered ineffective

Q: We are talking about using the rhythm method.

NORTH: Yes, non-use of contraceptives.

Q: The Catholic church was advocating it. It was sometimes known as Vatican roulette.

NORTH: Although in the end, it was advocated as an option, not necessarily the only option. I think that the pressures were such that it could have been the only choice if that

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view had been sustained. But the overall attitude toward family planning and population growth dampened the effectiveness of the program and its ability to expand and provide the services desired.

So these were some of the characteristics of the Reagan Administration: a private sector and market ideology carried to extreme, at times; the population issue which was carried to extreme. Also there were those in USAID who were so ideologically oriented in their fixation on the fear of communism that they were prepared to block even the provision of emergency relief to those suffering from famines. The extreme and moderate Republicans were continuously at odds within and around USAID which made the work at times difficult and tiresome. This was also somewhat the character of the Democrats when in office, but less so.

Creating the Center for Development Information and Evaluation in USAID-1983

Beginning in October 1983, I was asked to see what could be done to pull together the evaluation and information functions of USAID. There had been some thought about bringing the two operations together in a single unit, but this idea hadn't been fully thought out.

Prior to this time, there were two units. One an evaluation unit which was in the Bureau of Program and Policy Coordination, and the Development Information unit that had been started nearly 10 years before but had been moved around between the Program and Policy unit and the Bureau of Science and Technology. Both of them had become orphan units and were deteriorating in the resources available to them and in their capacities to be effective, although there were some good people working with them. The support from USAID was very minimal; the units also suffered from being used as a place to assign people that the management didn't know what to do with.

A GAO report had criticized USAID for not doing a good job of trying to capture its experience and use that experience for the improvement of its programs; there

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were concerns on the Hill about the effectiveness of the evaluation operation. As a consequence, I was asked to see what I could do to pull these units together and make them more effective.

When I started I found the units were in bad shape. The two units were in separate locations in pretty much the dregs of office space; they were poorly staffed, etc. So a small group of us, myself, Paula Goddard, the deputy director, and Maurie Brown, the head of the development information function, and Annette Binnendijk, head of the evaluation staff, developed the concept of a Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). While the term “center” was unusual in the USAID bureaucratic terms and had not been used before, it seemed to be accepted. In fact, the Center was only an office in the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination and three layers down from the head of the bureau. But the idea of using the term “center,” and creating something that functioned as a center, was to give it a better identity and to develop it as a service to USAID for evaluation and development information functions.

In the five years I was there we didn't progress as far as I had hoped. We were continuously faced with moves by various people in management to try to either cut us back or eliminate the functions because of operations expense budget limitations, personnel cuts, or a desire to exploit its resources for non-CDIE interests. We seemed to be an easy target. For example, within six months after receiving support for developing the center and getting it organized, there was a move to essentially eliminate it and disperse its functions. Also I had been told that I had a commitment to hold to a ceiling of 26 positions, mostly professional positions. Within that period the number had been cut to 16. So it was strenuous trying to keep the Center alive and create a constituency while developing the concept of the Center as something that would be useful to USAID and to the field missions. However, little by little we were able to develop the concept of the Center and sell the idea to USAID staff on how it could be of service to them and to

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overcome some of the bad reputations that the information and evaluation functions had had in the earlier period. But too much energy was spent on trying to keep it alive.

Eventually, I believe, we demonstrated that it was useful and effective and its studies were worthwhile. The combination of the information function and evaluation function over time built up into quite a substantial operation. Since I have left and under the Bush and Clinton Administrations, the operation has tripled in size, I believe, in terms of number of evaluation staff and expanded development information services, although the threat to dismember it continues. The concepts we developed in the Center became known among the donor community and were something of a model for other donors. With the reduction in resources for development programs and the closing of many missions, it would seem particularly desirable to maintain and strengthen the work of CDIE. Evaluative information and its dissemination can be a powerful influence on development policies and practices and thus serving U.S. interests; more effort should be focused on the professional and management personnel in the developing countries-obviously my bias that is not widely accepted.

Q: Did you share the information you were developing with private agencies and international community?

NORTH: Organizations and people interested in development all had access to the Center. We concentrated in our earlier period on making it useful to the field missions and trying to develop a rapport with field mission directors and staff where, I thought, there was the greatest potential for affecting the quality of the program, where programs are identified, designed, implemented, and evaluated. And I think we developed a good relationship with many of the field offices. Over time as the information from evaluations on the USAID's experience began to take shape, it was shared with other donors. I think the development information function is still relatively unique among the donor community, although others have built up their data bases and most of them have their own project information systems, few of them have the reference/research type service that helps

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project design and implementation staffs and contractors get the information they need on what the USAID's or other experience has been. Now there is a wide range of material that the Center can make available to people involved in development programs with access to a number of public and private information data bases of all kinds..

On a tangent for a minute. Back in the late fifties, following the initiation of the Point Four Program, which was primarily technical assistance, there was an activity started by Jack Ohly, who had been a senior officer in TCA and MSA in the early days, to collect oral histories of people coming back from overseas service. I suspect somewhere in the archives there is a collection of reports of people who had been serving in overseas missions-agriculturalists, health and education specialists-who, on their return, recorded their experiences. Where it is or how one gets access, I don't know. But it was an earlier start on an oral history program.

Q: I can understand the collection of data, the information. But what about evaluation? In a way this puts you in a position of here is one organization within USAID who is looking over the shoulder of other people, which, I think, would put you almost into the inspector general category and be rather sensitive. After all you are really talking about egos. Every new director goes out to a country and wants to have something to put his or her stamp on the program and gets very much committed to a program and here somebody is coming in and saying, "Yeah, this is all very nice, but it really isn't meeting the needs or doing what you said it would." How did you deal with that?

NORTH: The evaluation activity is always one of great sensitivity and generates strong feelings, pro and con, towards the evaluators: Who are they? Why are they asking questions? Why are they involved? What do they know about it? We experienced a lot of that, but the evaluation component of the CDIE had two or three different functions. In USAID, the evaluation function was a highly decentralized. The evaluation of ongoing projects, project completion reports, etc. was largely the responsibility of the overseas missions. We had no direct control over that process, but our responsibility was to try to

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improve the quality of these evaluations, provide technical assistance to the missions on the design and implementation of evaluations, providing people who are skilled in this area, and generally overseeing the process and making sure that each mission had evaluation plans and that they were being carried out. There was suppose to be an annual plan for evaluations for each mission. We were responsible for tracking the planning and implementation of the field mission evaluations and seeing how they were being used and how to make them more effective.

CDIE's function in this was largely advisory providing technical support and exhortations to get on with the work. CDIE didn't actually do the evaluations, by in large, of field operations, although there were some exceptions where we were asked to do special studies. Most of CDIE's evaluation agenda was on impact studies of programs that were either well along or had been completed, or special studies cutting across countries or issues to see what we could learn from the USAID's experience. There were a great number of these completed during the time I was there.

One of the most interesting to me was a series which we sponsored on the results of the U.S. investment over 30 years or so in the development of agricultural universities around the world. The particular study we undertook looked at agriculture university projects in about ten countries and included 20 or so universities that were created with U.S. assistance from land grant universities in the United States. This was a major U.S. foreign assistance initiative which I referred to earlier. In India alone there were 10 or 15 of these universities that had been assisted by U.S. land grant universities. This was a very interesting study because it was global and covered a major investment of U.S. assistance in institution building. I think it was quite a useful study with a series of reports by country and institution. There have been many other types of studies. One was on development management issues. The management of rural development. There was a series on women in development; a series on the impact of health programs, economic

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policy reforms, etc. Earlier there had been some interesting studies of irrigation, rural electrification, and rural roads which we drew on for lessons.

Douglas Bennet, when he was the administrator, had a special interest in impact evaluations primarily as an opportunity to get senior managers involved in reflecting on and learning about the performance and results of assistance. It worked reasonably well as long he took a personal interest but, subsequently, the demands of day-to-day operations made it impossible to get senior staff to take the time to participate in these evaluations.

The quality and scope of these special evaluations improved over time, though we were never fully satisfied with the kind of data base we had to work with and the depth of analysis that was possible within the time limits and resources available. Balancing timeliness and thoroughness in these evaluations was always a problem. It was an ongoing process to try to strengthen CDIE's work in these areas. But from these studies we then developed a program of abstracts and summaries and other means for making sure that the lessons and messages of the studies were shared within USAID and outside by other donors and the developing countries.

It seems a little incredible but one simple innovation was the publication of a four-page abstract of major reports which we shared throughout USAID and then with other donors. That technique was picked up by many of the donors, the World Bank and others who are doing the same sort of thing-all part of the learning process: how do you get people to learn from experience; how do you get the message to them; how do you get them to understand what the issues are; and how do you to get around the problem of information overload and people who don't read reports, don't read studies; how do you get them to use lessons from experience? We were trying all sorts of techniques on how to get people engaged in learning from USAID's considerable experience and how that experience is then applied to what they do.

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Q: In reading travel books or the like, one is continually coming across stories of people going out and finding projects which were started like wells, agricultural stations, etc. which when the money stopped they just died. I wonder whether this is a fair criticism or were the people just looking at a small thing and didn't see the big picture?

NORTH: Well, that has been a classic issue; people within USAID have been concerned about this over the years. The preoccupation of starting something new, of getting something going, dealing with an ongoing activity and the pressures from the State Department and others to have immediate impact, tend to undercut interest in long term results and the sustainability of the activity. Since by this time USAID had been involved in development activities for 25-30 years, we were beginning to be more sensitive to the effectiveness and sustainability of the development assistance operation. It was in this context that CDIE and others pushed forward some of the concepts of sustainability, which are now spread quite widely. This was not sustainability in the environmental sense, but in terms of program sustainability: institutional sustainability, and, most important, the sustainability of the benefits generated by the programs. We attempted to look at the projects, their experience and their impact to determine what was sustained and what was not.

Many of the CDIE studies addressed this issue and I think we have learned quite a bit. Certainly there is a lot of development activity, as you noted, that evaporated and is no longer visible. One of my ideas has been to develop a subject area that I call Development Archeology, which would involve looking at what happened to these development assistance projects: what was useful and what was not. Certainly there were a lot of activities that were short term in nature and were responding to various immediate interests. They were often related to the provision of equipment or a building or something of that sort. A lot of it was technical assistance that served to meet an immediate operating need. While there were always assertions about trying to build long term capacities, in

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fact, the activity was essentially to address a problem of the moment and not to build a sustained capacity.

I think the agricultural university program, I just mentioned, represents an interesting example of what is involved in trying to create, in many cases from scratch, an institutional capacity in agricultural education and research. Some people have said that was all very nice but it didn't last. Well, first I think it is important to bear in mind that those institutions in most cases continue today. There are some that didn't make it and died. But most of them continued and continue to grow. The basic task that had been set forth in creating these institutions was to help the developing countries generate a cadre of agriculturalists, which many of them did not have; create an agriculture program that was relevant to their country conditions; design a research program that addressed local problems. Many of those institutions and the concepts that were introduced at that time still exist.

Now some of these agricultural schools have done extremely well, like the one in Morocco or like the one in Malawi. There were virtually no Malawian agriculturalists in the country when the country became independent. USAID helped create the Bunda College of Agriculture which has operated effectively for many years, and continues to provide the agriculturalists working in Malawi. It is now moving on to the next generation and looking at the question of what its role is in the future. In many of these countries these institutions produced the trained cadres that didn't exist before USAID became involved. I have mentioned earlier the agricultural college in Ethiopia, which US assistance created. But people tend to say, "Well, the institution isn't doing very well now"; or, "it is not as relevant as it should be and there are all sorts of problems."

I think one has to make a distinction between the U.S. assistance that helped in getting the institution going, getting it established, and the need for a continuing process of organizational renewal if the institution is going to stay relevant and effective. Poor quality of leadership, economic crises or civil wars have often caused a decline in resources for these institutions and, in turn, a failure to ensure that they retained and built on their

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established capacities-certainly this has been the case in Nigeria. This doesn't mean that the initial effort was unsuccessful; it does mean that development is a never ending process. Therefore one has to be concerned with building into a program a process of renewal: a program for training new people, for maintaining links with technological developments world-wide, for developing new leadership that has a vision of the future and its requirements so that the institutions don't become obsolete.

The learning process is so critical to the development business. You can get a program started and get it well underway and then withdraw and feel you have done your job, but unless you have also insured that there is a process of renewal and continual strengthening and support for the program, it will fail.

One of my ideas behind the impact study of our assistance to agricultural universities was to provide a basis for a new generation of collaborative relationships with a new approach that would help these institutions and our own increase their relevance to the problems of the day and into the future-most of the people in the world are still in rural areas and food systems development including the environment continues to be a critical part of the development agenda. But the antipathy in USAID to anything that smelled of institutional development-or as I would prefer, institutional renewal- was too strong to give the idea a hearing. Yet it still is a key issue in the developing countries.

I think this experience is true for other sectors and other fields. Also one has to look at the question of what was sustained. Very often it isn't the project so much that is important to be sustained, but the technical knowledge that was transferred or the concepts such as in health programs that introduced a public health approach to medical services. It took quite a while to get these concepts and practices developed and get people trained in their use. The population programs with family planning services operating in most countries are a result of USAID's work over the years. I think a lot of USAID assistance has been very effective in introducing some of these concepts which had to be built on, revised, re-examined, and at times rejuvenated.

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There have been major contributions by USAID to development in the developing countries but it is sometimes hard to put one's finger on them as they blend into the local scene. I remember going back to Nigeria some years after we had pretty well phased out and talking to people in the Embassy and their saying, "Well, you know all that money you spent here, there is no evidence of it." Well, I think few of them had any idea that many of the institutions in the country had been started through USAID projects. (See earlier discussion on Nigeria.) There were other activities that had permeated the development environment and, in some instances, developed a critical mass of influence that has had a profound impact. Maybe the best examples of successful USAID projects and their benefits are when they merge into the local situation and become owned, used, and carried forward by the people of the country-the U.S. assistance role becomes invisible. In any event, unless there is a constant process of renewal and reshaping to new circumstances along with the development of new leadership that is committed to carrying them forward, they will die.

I developed an appreciation from CDIE's studies and my own experience of how critically important to sustained development is what we call the socio-political context. We failed to give adequate attention to this dimension of the development process, in part because of the pre-occupation with containing communism and the issue of sovereign rights. Little development is successful in situations where the national leadership and the local political system are antagonist to development, disinterested, and/or largely self-serving. Of course, in extreme cases you have countries that have gone into civil war and economic crises where there is no chance for development to be sustained. In these situations there is a massive loss of the skilled personnel that has been trained over the years and a deterioration in the institutions that had been created, as I have said earlier. That is an extreme case, but in other situations where social and economic disruption has not been so serious, you still find that, unless there is leadership that is committed to development, the development process doesn't get cared for very well. But in those situations where you do have committed, quality leadership, you find the development process continues to

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evolve, still with its ups and downs, and the development input from assistance programs is reasonably well preserved and made use of.

Q: Did you find that your Center was having problems with ambassadors or USAID directors overseas in certain countries who wanted to make the immediate impact for political gains?

NORTH: The Center's function was to evaluate what had happened before and what were the effects of what we had done. There were those, of course, who were only interested in the immediate impact. There was the "now" syndrome where day-to-day operations took precedence; but others were prepared to allocate some resources to look at what went before and its effectiveness. There wasn't much of a problem of interference by ambassadors or mission directors. If the program was still active, there was a concern about what the impact of the evaluation might be. We tried to emphasize that we were looking at experience. We would not be attacking particular managers or operations staffs, but rather seek their cooperation in an effort to learn from experience and that we needed their contribution to this process of learning. Well, some people bought on, some people didn't. There were staff in USAID, in technical offices, many quite outspoken in their views of how anybody else could possibly look at their area of work when they were the experts. Some missions objected on grounds that it would take too much of their staff time or that the studies would raise expectations or open old sores. Therefore, where those views prevailed, any external review would be unacceptable and inappropriate. We have a number of instances where we had great resistance to evaluation studies. On the other hand, many Missions found them useful for laying the basis for new programs.

Q: Can you name any, just to give a feel...?

NORTH: I think our attempt initially to look at some of the health programs were objected to by those who were managing the programs. The Center, however, has put out some major studies on health programs that I think are quite useful, if not as conclusive as one

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would like. Like most things there often is an element of personality as well as substance. We were able to deal with some of these problems. But when you are doing an evaluation, and I am working on one now, you run into all sorts of personality conflicts and sensitivities and issues just getting started. For example, one of the major studies we undertook was of the onchocerciasis program, which had started back in the late seventies and in which USAID had made a major investment. The program was aimed at eliminating onchocerciasis in the West African region.

Q: What type of disease was that?

NORTH: It's river blindness which results from the bite of a fly which carries the infection from people to people. Over time the infection accumulates in the person bitten and results in blindness. USAID and other donors supported a program for treating all the running waters of a large portion of the West African region. By spraying these rivers, the larvae would be killed and reduce the fly infestation. It was an ambitious program.

This had been going on for quite a while. It was started initially by USAID. There were 14 countries contributing to it and seven recipient African countries. But the initial impetus for this came out of support from USAID and from a public health doctor in the Africa Bureau (Doctor Clayton Curtis) in USAID who took an interest in supporting this project and gradually built up the program. It was run by WHO and their field office in Ouagadougou. We wanted to do a study of the experience of this program. The director, a very able African, Dr. Samba, when he first heard of the evaluation, was very upset...How could we do this, it was an international organization?...and was quite opposed to it. He came to Washington and we met and talked about it and what we were trying to do and emphasized the importance of recording the history of the program and the experience and what we have learned from it and identifying some of the issues. We wanted his input. As a result, he reversed himself and became most supportive and most helpful. I think we produced a very useful study that served as a basis for stressing the importance of addressing related issues of the socio-economic impact of the onchocerciasis program,

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as well as its medical impact. It provided a useful basis for the future evolution of that program and its history is now recorded.

Well that experience has not been unusual. We often were able to sit down and talk out what we were trying to do with an evaluation. Although we were not doing an audit and we weren't out to do a financial and accounting review, obviously, if in the process of the evaluation, something came up, then we would have to look into it. But our emphasis was more on the impact of the program than of the details of its management. So the kind of studies that CDIE was sponsoring were more of this kind, i.e., results and impact, and not audits. During my time there we covered a wide range of topics such as U.S. assistance for women in development, management of rural development, agricultural universities, credit programs, health programs, social marketing and family planning, microenterprises, economic policy reforms, the IFAD as well as a number of guides on aspects of evaluation procedures, and a review of emergency assistance in Africa. From the first and later syntheses of all of USAID's project evaluations, we were able to identify a number of basic issues in program operations and effectiveness particularly the first concerns about the sustainability of development programs.

With the decentralized system, i.e., where the ongoing evaluation of activities was largely done by the field, there has been a continuing controversy about the quality and objectivity of the evaluations. I am afraid we didn't make as much headway in improving that system as we should have, but it was not something over which we had direct control. We had to influence, cajole and assist to try to improve it. I expect we made some headway, but that is where the managers become quite sensitive. But if you can get managers to appreciate that an evaluation is a critical component of the decision-making process-one of their management tools, they should support the evaluation process, not fight it and they have a better chance of having a successful program.

At the same time, the development information work of the Center has progressed well and has become increasingly popular. It is relatively unique in the development assistance

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business; it has provided valuable services to people working in development who wanted to know the latest developments or experience that would help them design a project or policy or manage a program. It is an important means for getting the word out from evaluations. Moreover, its database of USAID project and reports, its extensive networks with other information systems, and its reference and research services has provided an extraordinary resource for development specialists.

Q: You left in 1989. Obviously you have been doing consulting work since, but we will stop at the 1989 period. You left at least with the Center in tact and doing pretty much what you hoped to have it do?

NORTH: Yes. I think we felt reasonably confident that we had created the Center, had overcome various attempts to kill it off and kept it alive and going. Its evolution was slower than we hoped, but it came to be recognized and accepted, both internationally and within USAID. And, as I say, it has now blossomed into a major operation.

There is one dimension of this I can add. During the time that I was at the Center, I was also Chairman of the Expert Group on Evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. The DAC was a US creation dating back to the time when we were the major donor and wished to mobilize other donors to become involved in the development business. The U.S. created the Development Assistance Committee with representatives from all the Western donors. As time has passed, the tables have turned and now other donors use it to beat up on the U.S. (as well as each other, diplomatically of course) for not doing its fair share in providing assistance. One of the many subcommittees that it had was the one on evaluation where the evaluation officials of all the donors, both bilateral and multilateral (there were 18 countries, the World Bank, UNDP and the 4 regional banks participating in the subcommittee) met twice a year to develop a program and agenda that would help donors understand how the evaluation process was working and how to make it more effective, have more impact, how to improve evaluation methodology and processes and try to get a better sense of the results

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of development programs. I had an interesting time in the four years I chaired that group working with different national groups with their very different personalities and biases and moving them together. I think that during those four years, we elevated the importance of evaluation in international development significantly.

One major accomplishment was getting the DAC evaluation group to support a series of dialogues with evaluators from developing countries (something DAC would not customarily do). The Germans opposed this idea but didn't block it; the Norwegians and Swedes were strongly in favor with Norway providing significant funding. The first meeting with 80 evaluation specialists from all parts of the world was held in Paris at the DAC. Several regional meetings have been held subsequently.

Some concluding observations

Q: In one interview I did long ago, somebody who served for a while in Tanzania, was saying that Nyerere had charmed everybody in the Western donor world, particularly because he was considered a socialist, the Scandinavians and especially the Swedes, where he was really leading his country into ruin by developing almost like collective farms and villages. How did you find the Swedes in this international group? Did they have a different agenda?

NORTH: In my experience with the Scandinavians, not just the Swedes, but the Norwegians and Danes, they tended to be very independent minded and somewhat antagonist to U.S. views of the world and its approaches. Of course, they were very supportive of the more socialist countries such as Vietnam and some of the others. Tanzania, as you say, was a favored country for them and they made large investments in social services there. Kenya was more private sector-oriented and was less popular, although they were active there as well. But they tended to favor those countries with a more socialistic orientation, which were the countries that the U.S. tended not to favor. But in those days of the New Directions policy, which was that period in the seventies I talked

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about, everybody was interested in basic human needs and direct assistance, we were not at odds with each other; and all donors were very supportive of Tanzania.

The World Bank under McNamara went overboard in its support for Nyerere and considered the country a great example of a country that knows how to address basic human needs. Tanzania and Sri Lanka were the two glowing models of this policy. Though, I think in the Tanzania case, the Bank and other donors were too generous in giving over half a billion dollars a year of assistance, far beyond anything the Government had in its budget for development activities. Too generous in support of the socialistic approach and not enough questioning of the economic underpinnings to sustain the country's development programs. And, of course, over time it became evident that the country could not begin to sustain its development programs because it had pretty well destroyed its system of economic incentives, the economic base for development as opposed to the social base.

Then, of course, there was the other issue in Tanzania resulting from its efforts to consolidate the villages; it started out, I think, fairly rationally but then became more emotional which led to a few excesses. But the fact remains that Tanzania has not had the social and political crises that you have seen in other parts of Africa. So, although it is a country that is extremely poor, it has kept going and struggled with its development processes, perhaps in some ways more successfully than others that have had such severe political problems. We have to wait for a more history to unfold.

More broadly, looking back over this era from 1950s to the present, one can wonder what has been accomplished with the foreign assistance program. My own view is that there has been extraordinary range of accomplishments. First and very important from a development perspective, the foreign assistance program and USAID in association with many U.S. institutions have been pioneers in a great many areas that others have now picked up. Some of these include: the creation of a great many institutions in the developing countries that provided training and research and technological leadership

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for the countries' development, the training of hundreds of thousands of people from the developing countries in the United States who returned as leaders in both political and development arenas, the initiation of population and family planning programs (beginning in the Eisenhower Administration days), the initiation of programs to protect the environment and environmental assessments (beginning in the 70s), the initiation of programs to bring women more fully into development, program lending both general and sectoral with and without policy reforms, the introduction of the concepts of primary health care in the 1950s in Africa that spread world-wide and the achievements of small pox eradication and other immunizations for children and the onchocerciasis eradication program, and school feeding program and other food for work activities, and many, many other initiatives. One cannot claim all the credit for the accomplishments of these programs as so many others became involved. But they became involved largely because of U.S. Initiatives, encouragement and the formation of groups like the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. This is also true for much of the emergency assistance provided by the U.S. that has saved millions of lives that otherwise would have been lost to famine, disease, civil wars, etc.

But the key point is that much of the pioneering work came from USAID support-often when some members of Congress and USAID worked together- and was sustained by the foreign assistance program. However, the problems that we pioneered in identifying and designing ways to address-and continue to- are still powerful undercurrents that affect global development; it takes and will take extraordinary levels of resources and leadership commitment to keep them from overwhelming future global well-being.

In sum, I believe that U.S. leadership in international development from the days of the Marshall Plan to the present has been one of the great themes of the history of these times. Where these programs have failed or accomplished less than hoped for the primary responsibility lies with the failure of leadership and the recognition of the socio-political processes that provide the necessary environment for effective development. One cannot know the answer but: what if the U.S. had not taken the lead in international development

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in the 1940s? What would be the image of the U.S. today in the world? What kind of a world would we be living in today?

Q: Well, why don't we wrap it up now? I think this was fine. I thank you very much.

NORTH: Okay.

Note: Since leaving USAID in January 1989, I have worked as a private consultant on international development assignments with the World Bank, UNDP, IDB, USAID, the Global Environment Facility, the IFC, and the DAC. These assignments have been concerned with such topics as institutional development and capacity building, the management of TC, aid coordination, HIV/AIDS management in the field, post-apartheid Southern Africa development strategies, USAID country development strategies, evaluation and dissemination systems, etc. It has been an experience of continuing education.

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End of interview